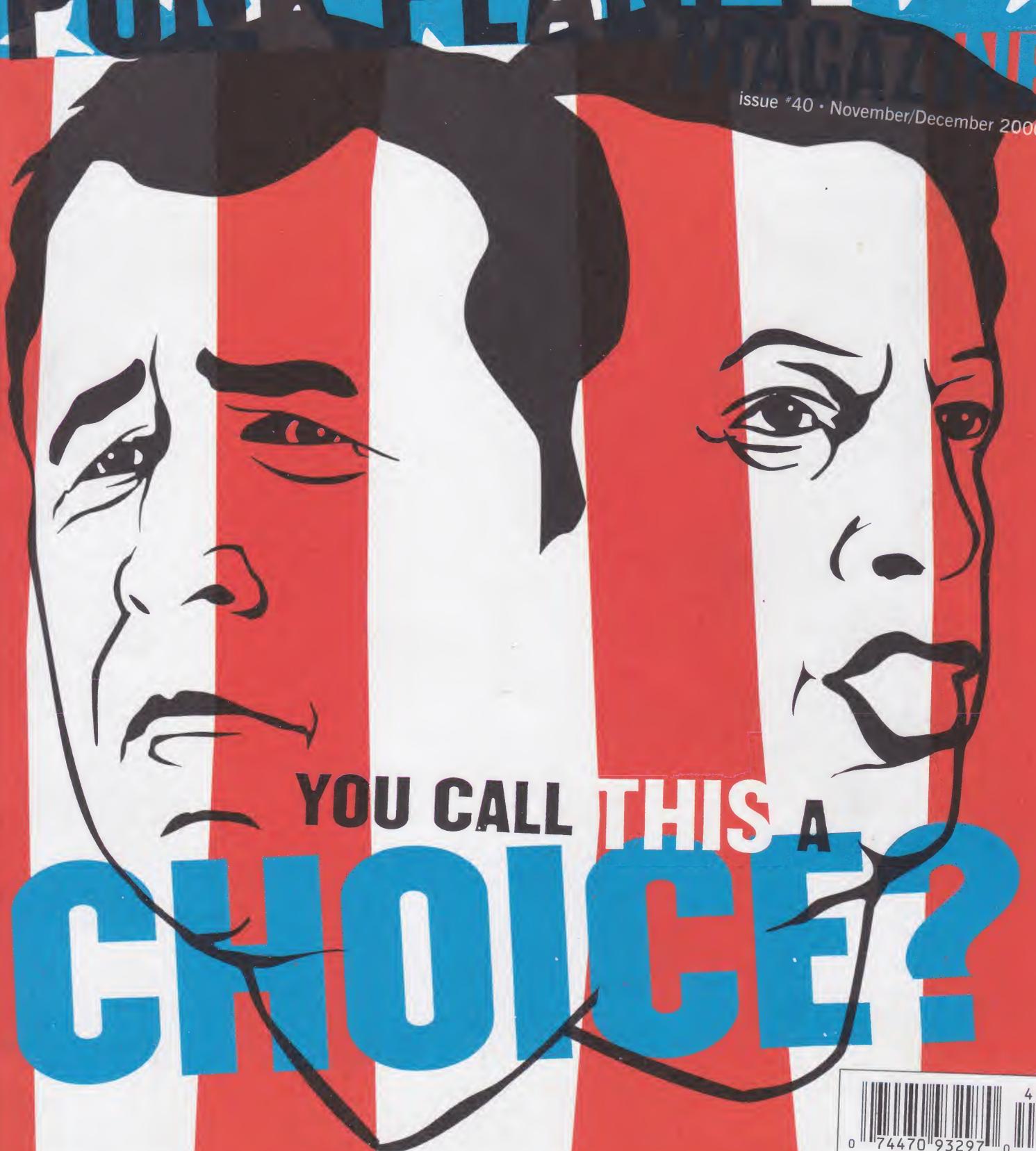


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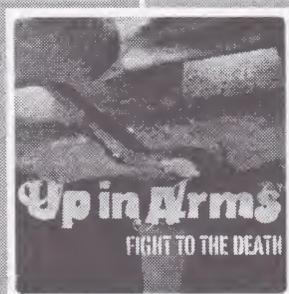
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GREENER PASTURES P.40

PP40

One of the people whose face graces our cover will be our next president. As depressing as that is, it's reality. We thought it was important that whichever way the vote goes, *Punk Planet* told you about the *real* man behind the media image. So we recruited the authors of two unapologetic biographies of Gore and Bush to tell us about who these guys really are. The results are eye-opening.

For those of you buying this issue after election day, meet the new boss. For those of you lucky enough to pick it up in the weeks before November 7th, I hope our exposes of Al Gore and George W Bush help you make the right decision.

Me? I'm voting the only way I think is right: Nader. Take that for what you will.

Unfortunately, I can't use this introduction space to expound further about the importance of casting a third party vote—I've got business to attend to.

This issue marks the 40th issue of *Punk Planet*. Can you believe it? I sure can't. So much has happened over the six and a half years we've been publishing, but one thing has always stayed constant: Every two months a new issue has come out. It's something you've been able to count on as well as something I've counted on as well. But the unfortunate reality is that over the last year or so, it has become harder and harder to make that mark. Why? Because we're very slowly, yet very painfully going broke.

There are a myriad of reasons for why our finances have been heading south, most of them very boring. But the main reasons are an increase in the price of printing the magazine (mainly because of paper costs), which has led to a print bill almost \$10,000 higher than last years (yeesh!), while concurrently arriving at a plateau as far as magazine sales go. In short, our costs have been increasing while our sales haven't. After much soul searching, we've decided that we have to increase our prices.

It's with that background that I'm sorry to announce that this is the last issue of

Punk Planet for sale at \$3.50. Issue #41 of *Punk Planet* will cost 45 cents more at \$3.95. This small cost increase will contribute greatly to helping us continue to put out *PP* six times a year at the same page length and cover our higher print costs.

Additionally, all you advertisers make note that our ad rates will be going up again this year. But not by a whole hell of a lot—our ad rates are *still* among the lowest out there. And to help those of you with low budgets just trying to get your zine or label or whatever off the ground, we've actually created a new ad size, the 1/12th page, which is our lowest priced ad ever.

Finally, and this one is *really* important for our ultimate survival, we are in the process of finding new outlets to put *Punk Planet* in. While we're sold in all sorts of great stores, there are still tons out there that don't carry us. We're in the process right now of finding the right people that will help us get into those places. We're actively looking and I'll let you know more when we do.

Enough boring stuff, eh? This issue also marks the return of a couple of features that have been missing for *Punk Planet* for the last six months or so. After hiatuses, I'm glad to announce that our fiction section and our film reviews are back. They're both manned by new people: Columnist Leah Ryan has bowed out of the columns game and is now the fiction editor; and David Wilson, who did an interview with filmmaker Jem Cohen for us a year or so ago and has been making, distributing and screening independent films for quite some time has taken over the film reviewing duties. I'm expecting both David and Leah to do great things in their respective sections. Thanks guys!

One last thing: I'd like to thank all of you for sticking with us for 40 issues and thank you in advance for helping us get to put out 40 more.

See you in 2001,

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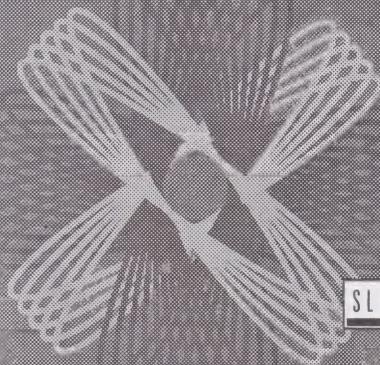


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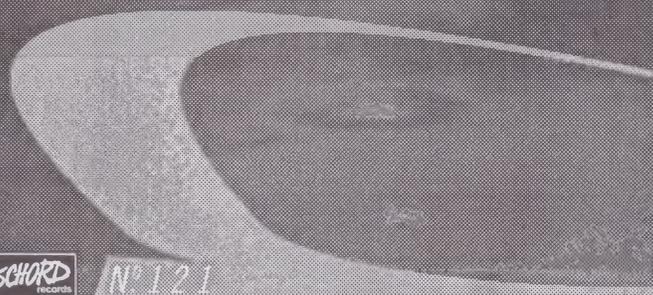


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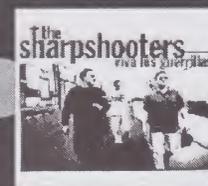


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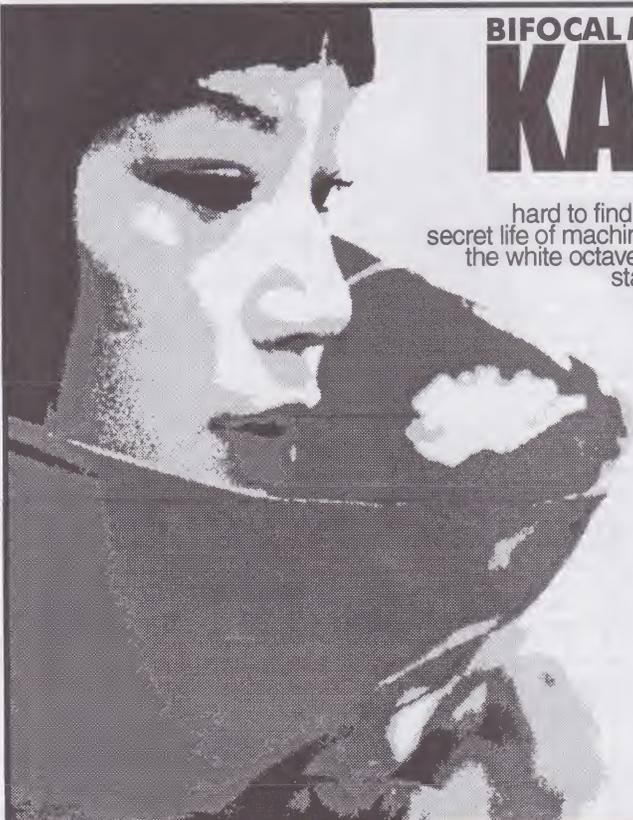


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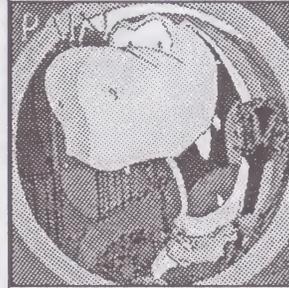


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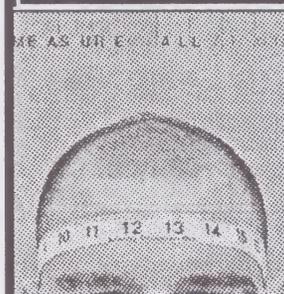
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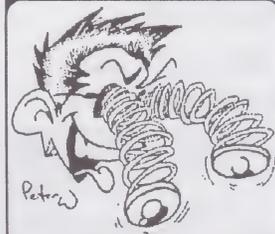
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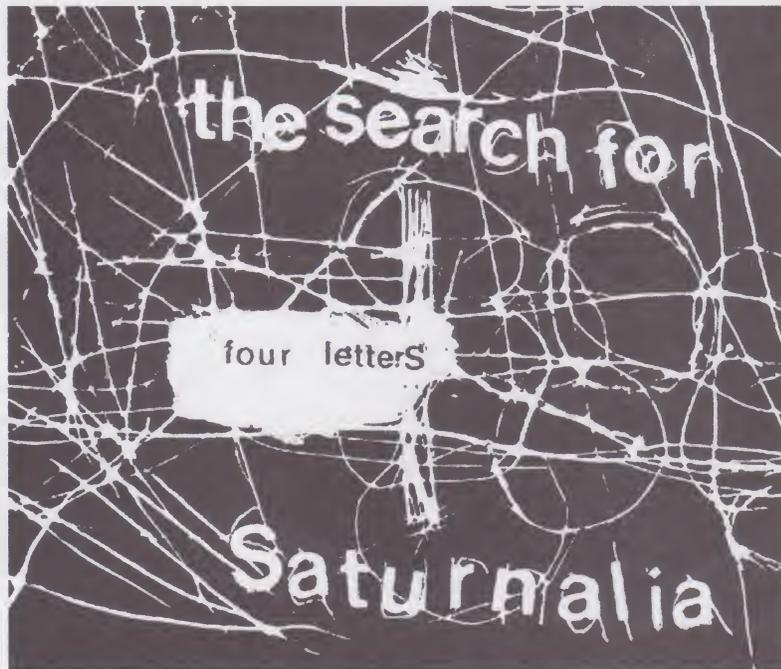


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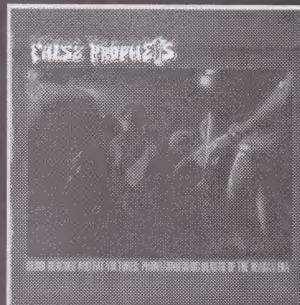


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I don't feel so good. Perhaps it has something to do with the old saying 'you are what you eat.' I just spent the last 20 minutes mowing down corn

chips and root beer, reading Thomas Hardy, with an old skool mixtape blaring from my boombox. I am down with the fucked up multi-tasking, yep. Despite my woeful belly and impending acne, I am even able to enjoy eating a mint Aero with my left hand while my right hand continues to scribble away in my journal. Pretty impressive huh. Why I am stuffing my face with sugary goodness that burns my throat is no mystery to me. It's a crappysad day and so I allow myself to gorge on crappysad food. I don't know what compelled me to pick a mint Aero. Didn't the bar used to be entirely green? They're mostly only air bubbles anyway. Yummy scam. Why all the junk food, caffeine and loud music fer realz you might ask? (I realise this is normal daily living for many of you resilient folk out there, hee hee.) Well, I don't have any booze in the house and right now I need some sort of fortification here as I pen my last column for the ever-fabulous Punk Planet. Yes mes amies, I hate to break the bad or good news (depending on whether you dug my neurotic babbling or not) but the time has indeed come for the Banana Powered P2K Bug to move along me thinks. As much as I've loved being a part of the magazine over the few years that I've done so, I do think my stay has run a little dry. Why milk a crabby cow if the moo juice simply ain't a-flowing, ya know?

I'm not leaving *Punk Planet* with any bad feelings at all—quite the contrary. But sometimes it's just your gut telling you what your next move ought to be. And it's not like I intend to "fall out of the scene" entirely. You're bound to hear grumblings from this ol' gal about town I'm sure. I'll still be producing zines, drawing comics, making music, going to shows and generally

kicking up a ruckus. My clothes may have gotten plainer and my hair longer but I'm still lovin' all that shit up. Regarding my barrel of cultural monkey production, I'll leave you with the detes at the end of all this.

I'm sure that Mr. Sinker and the PP peeps will have no trouble filling up the space with some new rad hepcat. I'm also certain that s/he will rock as I've always enjoyed the diversity and uniqueness of the columnists' writing. I love the hodge-podge of subject matter that comes together for each issue. Pretty great. Makes me feel like something of an ingrate and rather foolish for letting the column go. Apparently it's a little bit of a coveted gig within punk circles, but punk points shmunk shmoints. It is work, just like anything else, and sometimes your workload has just got to give.

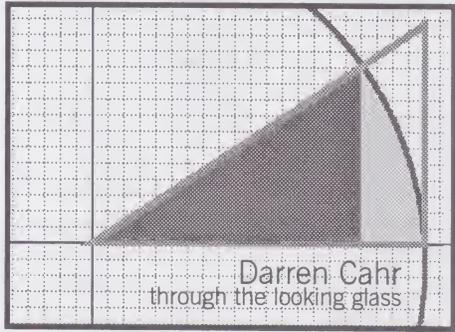
Hopefully by this time next year, I'll be off to the east coast for grad school. Craziiness. Keep your fingers crossed for me that I get accepted into my school of choice. Coo.

Huge thank yous to Dan and Eric for recruiting me as a Planeteer way back when. Thanks to everyone who wrote me kind letters, sorry I'm not exactly the world's greatest penpal, woe! But it really was the letters that would make my day 100% brighter. I've met a lot of incredible people through the magazine (you know who you are) and it makes me feel pretty lucky. So I give thanks for that. Ghod, I feel like we should be diving into the stuffing and cranberry sauce any second now. I'm rilly not this mushy, hold on—wassaaaaap! (beep!)—but I just wanted to make sure that my appreciation not go unnoticed, you know? And last but not least, thank you o sassy reader for humouring my two unstable Canadian cents worth over the years. This ride has been better than Kool-Aid watermelon punch.

I'm gonna miss this popstand.

The usual contact detes for the last time (sniff): Patti Kim, Box 68568, 360A Bloor Street West, Toronto Ontario, M5S 1X1 Canada or fhabzine@interlog.com. The 'fhab' in 'fhabzine' is the acronym for my wee zine Fuzzy Heads Are Better. If you send me a couple of dollars I will send you pocket-sized goodies. Or you can sniff my dirty online arse at www.interlog.com/~fhabzine. Digital doodoo for you and you! It's all good. I will miss you even though I do not know you. Bye!!!

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ated when a bunch of malcontents on the "punk politics" board (myself included) decided that *Maximumrockandroll* (MRR for those of you hip enough to spell), the dominant punk 'zine of the day (back in the Pleistocene era), was too narrow in its focus, too dismissive of things that weren't sufficiently "punk." It wouldn't review records by certain bands, and had decreed that certain things were "punk" and certain things were not, and that things that were not punk were not worth discussing.

This was, at the time (40 issues of *Punk Planet* and several years ago) a fairly commonplace view. People who liked "punk" were fans of punk, and were supposed to be cynical or distrustful of anything that wasn't three chords and a cloud of dust. That period of time, however, was a critical one for Western popular culture, and Western popular music in particular. Nirvana had loosened the pursestrings of major labels, which had snapped up a number of bands that were, well, punk. These bands were introduced to a larger following. Simultaneously, a number of bands that learned other lessons from Nirvana (and precursors such as the Melvins and the Jesus Lizard) brought sludge-rock and noise rock to the mainstream (or at least to your corner music store). A lot of kids who liked the Beastie Boys found they liked Bad Religion. And folks who liked Public Enemy found that they liked Helmet.

Sometime during this period, metal heads and punks and rap fans began to merge. Rage Against the Machine sold millions of records. Green Day sold millions of records. KoRn sold millions of records. And a lot of the same people bought all of these records. Ozzfest became as significant as Lollapalooza, and in fact, Lollapalooza soon went to that great festival in the sky.

So the question arises once again: is punk culture disintegrating? And, more importantly, is this a bad thing?

Punk Planet was originally cre-

Soon, bands became very difficult to categorize. This may seem hard to believe now, but it used to be incredibly easy to categorize bands. They were "alternative" or they were "punk" or they were "metal" or they were "pop" or they were "R&B" or they were "rap" or they were "rock." These categories mean less and less, in terms of the actual music being played. Different categories, however, representing their attitudes and worldview, may be in order.

Fugazi is still, in many ways, the epitome of what it means to be "punk." But it no longer has much to do with the music Ian MacKaye plays, which has been influenced by everything from skronk rock to world music to funk. What makes them "punk" is the way they live their lives, the way they control their music, the way they give back to their fans. They are not part of some vast corporate juggernaut. They are part of a genuine, grass-roots community.

As much as it disgusts me to say it (and trust me, it does) they have more in common with Phish than they do with Green Day. Fugazi exists to serve its fans, not to enrich Fugazi or anyone else. The fact that Fugazi do just fine while supporting their community is not an affront to their fans, but a point of pride. They sell hundreds of thousands of records and sell out concert halls around the nation, and they do it without compromising their ethics.

And that's what "punk" means today. It means working outside the system, to some degree, to serve your fans in an independent fashion. In that regard, there are metal bands and rap acts and folk singers that are more punk than the Offspring.

Being punk means two things—it means devotion to a certain style of music (initially derived from the MC5, the Stooges and the Ramones) and devotion to a way of living your life and dealing with others. It is in this latter manner than punk distinguishes itself as something more than a passing musical fad. The real "punks" in America (MacKaye, Albini, etc) are now approaching their third decade of making music. They are old fucks, to put a fine point on it, and they are still irascible and irritating and refuse to be put in the easy categories where America's cultural standard-bearers (large entertainment conglomerates) want to place them. Large record labels have no aesthetic anymore—only a gauge of "youth" interest in their music.

They don't take risks, they serve demographics. Punk attitudes are necessary (and not punk devotion to certain very specific musical styles) if music is going to retain any kind of vibrancy going into the 21st century. That's what *Punk Planet* has provided for the past 40 issues—an attitude.

In my opinion, it has been the right attitude.



It was New Year's Eve at Gilman Street (well, I guess it was New Year's Eve everywhere else, too), 1987 going into 1988. If I

remember right (and I'm sure some know-it-all will correct me), Isocracy, Sticky and Operation Ivy were playing.

Gilman was celebrating its first anniversary, and what a year it had been. Thanks to having a regular place to play and hang out, new bands had been coming out of the woodwork, but it was still an essentially underground scene. A couple years down the road some of the bands would be starting to get famous while the kids who hung out there would be splintering off into different sub-groups based on boyfriends, girlfriends, musical tastes, drug and alcohol abuse or lack thereof, but for now it was like hanging out in some basement or rec room with your extended family.

Right around midnight I was crouched on the side of the stage watching either Sticky or Operation Ivy. I was just thinking how great everything was when some enormous fat kid came flying through the air and landed square on my back.

People jumping around and landing on each other was nothing unusual, but because of the position I was in, I couldn't brace myself in time, and as 200 pounds or more of blubber landed on me, I felt my foot being bent backwards. Suddenly something snapped.

Fortunately it was only my big toe, not my back, but it still hurt like hell. I kind of knew right away that it was broken, but I tried to shrug it off. More than once I'd gotten sprained ankles or similar injuries in the pit, and they'd always healed pretty quickly, so I told myself that this would be the same. Why, only a few weeks earlier, I'd landed flat on my back while trying to impress some girl with how fast I could walk backward, and found, when I got up, that I could barely walk.

"You're going to have to stay off that foot for a month or two," people told me, and I laughed. No way was I going to stay off my foot for more than a day or two, and sure enough, a day or two later, it was feeling better; within a week I'd forgotten all about it.

So I assumed it would work the same way this time, but I was wrong. For the next few weeks I was dragging my right foot behind me, trying to believe that the excruciating pain that started in my big toe and spread through my entire foot and halfway up my leg would soon get better.

I never considered going to the doctor, partly because I didn't have any money to pay for it, partly because I didn't even have a doctor, not having been to one in years. I just kept assuming the pain would eventually go away.

And it did, to an extent, but not completely. From then on, my big toe pointed out instead of in, and whenever I'd walk more than a mile or so, I'd be in minor agony. Sometimes it would throb with sharp, stabbing pains like hell when I was just sitting still, and though over the years, I got used to the pain to a point where it seemed almost normal, I always felt a bit crippled.

Once in a while I'd think about that fat kid who'd landed on me and curse him and all his descendants: his one moment of trendy exuberance had cost me more than a decade of discomfort and pain. But oh well, I told myself, for my age I was in pretty good shape; I could still walk and dance and run about. I tried acupuncture and massage and exercise, all of which helped, but didn't essentially alter the fact that I was a guy with a misshapen and crippled big toe.

Well, fast forward to the summer of 2000, and there I was in Berkeley's Ohlone Park, playing an aberrant form of punk rock soccer. None of the people involved were especially athletic; in fact half of them would take every chance when the ball wasn't near them to pull on a cigarette or a beer. But I was playing hard, and when the ball landed right at my feet, I saw an opportunity to pass it over to a teammate in front of goal.

In order to do that, I had to get my foot well under the ball and lift it past an opponent, but on my way to doing so, something went wrong. I don't know if my foot got caught in the grass or the ball suddenly changed into solid iron, but as I let fly, I felt an excruciating pain shoot through my foot, centered on, yes, THAT big toe.

I kept on playing, increasingly aware that my foot was dragging behind me like a lead weight, and trying to pretend that it didn't hurt like hell. Sort of an exaggerated version of what I'd been doing for the past twelve and a half years.

I even scored two goals, something I'd never managed before, but when the game was over, I stopped to have a look at my toe, only to find that it had turned several delicious shades of red, blue and purple and swollen to nearly double its normal size. I tried to get everyone to look at it, but they turned away in disgust, except, of course, for my four year-old nephew, who was utterly awestruck at the spectacle.

Anesthetized by a bit (actually a good bit) of whiskey, I headed down to Gilman for the American Steel gig, and had a great old time in the pit, which was a heady mixture of new school kids, some of whom probably weren't even born yet when Gilman opened, and some decidedly old school ones. At one point I

looked up to find that I was dancing next to Jesse Michaels of Operation Ivy fame, and wondered, "What is that old guy doing out here in the pit with all these teenagers?" Until, of course, I remembered that as old as Jesse had gotten over the years, I was still 20 years older.

Right near the end of the show, somebody came crashing into me and sent me flying into mid-air. When I came down, I landed—no, not on my injured toe, but on my back heel, which promptly twisted my ankle into some shape that nature never intended it to be. The moment I hit the ground, I knew that some damage had been done, but hey, at least it was on the same foot. So it was no big problem limping to my bicycle and making my way home.

By now you're probably wondering either a) if I'm going to take up an entire column moaning about my various aches and pains; or b) why someone my age doesn't learn to stay the hell out of the pit and out of soccer games. Like, haven't I got a rocking chair somewhere with my name on it?

But wait. You haven't heard the whole story yet. So, yes, I'd broken my big toe again, but in a blindingly fortunate way, i.e., back in the opposite direction. Yes, it still hurt, but it was a different kind of pain, the kind of pain you can tell is going to get better. And so it's been: although it's still sore, each day I get back more flexibility, and already I can walk several miles without serious discomfort. It's as though I've been given a new foot; I can hardly walk down the street without feeling a quiet elation. Getting my toe re-broken turns out to be one of the luckiest things that could have happened to me on my three-month trip to America.

There was other stuff as well. My old band, the Potatomen, resurrected itself from the ashes once more, and we started playing hit-and-run guerrilla gigs on the sidewalks, only getting run off by the authorities once, in hideous downtown Santa Rosa ("Yes, we want to have a quaint little artsy-cultural district, but we don't want people actually hanging out in it"). Seriously. The police have ordered that no one can stand around on the sidewalks after 8 p.m. Even the local cafe has to take its tables inside after that hour. I suspect that Santa Rosa has more or less got its head up its ass when it comes to grasping the concept of what big city life is supposed to be about. Oh, but they've got plenty of lovely malls, so who needs a street life anyway, right?

My big discovery on this outing with the Potatomen was a rechargeable battery pack that can run a small amp for half an hour and is small enough to carry, along with our guitars, amps and drums, on the train or bus, so we'd no longer have to depend on either venues or cars in order to play. We'd just show up wherever we wanted and started playing on the sidewalk. Until the police turned up, of course.

Another highlight of the summer was seeing the Weakerthans again. Not just once, but three times, as I felt compelled to follow them down the coast to Los Angeles. They are pure and simply the best and most important band happening in North America today, and I only limit it to North America because I haven't seen that many non-North American bands of late.

Not-so-highlights include the post-hippie landlord, complete with "Tassajara Zen Center" t-shirt, who's trying to evict me, my brother and two other people from the Berkeley house we've occupied for the last couple dozen years. The real killer was when his henchmen, aka his college-age daughter and her boyfriend, came into my room and saw all the Lookout memorabilia (my room was the headquarters for Lookout Records from 1990 to 1995) and cooed, "We just want to say what great admirers we are of all you've accomplished."

I was waiting for them to say, "So there's no way we could dream of evicting you from your cozy rent-controlled home," but they didn't. Instead, evil corporate hippie landlord dad chimed in with, "Yeah, well shit flows downhill." I'm still trying to puzzle out what the hell that was supposed to mean.

Thanks to Berkeley being one of the world's last bastions of communism, the landlord is finding that evicting long-term tenants can be a nightmare of gargantuan proportions. The last landlord who tried gave up in despair after a year or two, but this one seems a bit more determined. I'd almost feel sorry for him, if I didn't know he was hoping to throw us out in the streets and then turn around and double or triple his money by turning the joint into condominiums or overpriced student housing.

But I've also got to be fair and acknowledge that things never would have gotten to this point if the city of Berkeley hadn't spent the last 30 years trying to deny the laws of economic reality. While the San Francisco Bay Area was turning into one of the hottest boom towns on the planet, the crusty old radicals and neo-leftist yuppies who run Berkeley were trying to pretend that we could remain forever in some 1970 time warp, where everyone had a nice little brown shingle house with tie-dyed curtains, a cute little yard for the rugrats to play in and the pot plants to grow in, rents forever pegged at \$100 a month.

They passed rent control laws and refused to let anyone build new housing. Surprise, surprise, now it's the millennium, and unless you've been in your rent-controlled home since the Dark Ages (like myself and my friends) or you've very, very rich, you don't get to live in Berkeley anymore. And because rent control forces landlords to charge only a fraction of what apartments are worth these days (I've been paying \$150 a month for my room; without rent control, it could easily fetch \$800 or more), property owners are desperately trying to get people like us out of their buildings so they can raise the rents.

Another effect of rent control is that many landlords stopped repairing or maintaining their buildings. Except for work we did ourselves, our house hasn't been repaired or painted in 20 years. What's more, the old landlord didn't bother paying property taxes, so right about the time our house was in danger of literally falling down, it got sold off for back taxes and our new evil landlord went to work on kicking us out.

Something similar has been happening in San Francisco, especially in the Mission District, where many of the punks and artist types live. After a couple decades as a colorful and diverse

borderline slum, local yuppies and property developers couldn't help noticing that the Mission was attractively situated right next to downtown San Francisco and would make an excellent location for new businesses and housing. All that was necessary was to clear out those nasty people who were already living there.

And that's exactly what's been happening. Half the people I know in San Francisco have either been evicted or threatened with eviction. They've been marching in the streets with signs saying "Stop gentrification" and "Leave our neighborhood alone," but as much as I sympathize with them, they're living in la-la land. People with shitloads of money are not going to pass up the opportunity to live in one of San Francisco's most diverse and fascinating neighborhoods just because it means someone with less money will have to move out. Even more so, real estate developers who stand to pocket millions of dollars are not going to be too worried about preserving the character of the old Mission, especially when through their eyes the old Mission looks primarily like a haven for drug dealers, welfare scroungers and various lowlifes and petty criminals.

There's far more to the Mission than that, of course, but it would be hard to make a case for leaving it the way it was, i.e., a high-crime neighborhood where hard drugs are openly sold on the streets and begging is one of the most active forms of street life. But the real villains are neither today's yuppies and developers nor the down-and-outers who are being forced out of the Mission, but rather the smug, self-satisfied, sanctimonious San Franciscans of two and three decades ago, who, like their compatriots in Berkeley, thought they could live forever in some drug-addled navel-gazing haze while the whole rest of the world went on its merry capitalist way.

You can pass all the rent control laws you want, you can limit building heights and block new construction, but you can't permanently abrogate the law of supply and demand. Thanks to the Silicon Valley boom, literally billions of new dollars have flowed into the Bay Area economy, and those dollars have forced house and apartment prices up into stratospheric realms.

Couple that with a dramatic increase in population—California's has more than doubled since I moved there in 1968—and you're left with few choices: you can pave over half the state, as Los Angeles has been trying to do, you can build more housing, which San Francisco hasn't been letting people do, or you can accept that popular places like San Francisco and Berkeley are only going to be home to the rich and well-connected.

I suppose there's one more way of going about it: you could try the old Soviet system, where the government decides who gets to live in what city, and sometimes I think that's what San Franciscans would like. I can imagine them setting up some sort of committee which would evaluate people based on ethnicity, economic status, and most of all, scene points. In other words, if you're black or Latino, if you've got a requisite number of piercings or you're in a band, you get to stay. If you wear a suit and tie or earn more than \$50,000 a year, you're out of luck.

Yes, I know it's tempting, but it's never going to happen, nor, for that matter, should it. Cities thrive not just on diversity, but also on openness and possibilities. For years, San Francisco has been choking on its own narrow-mindedness and xenophobia, and now it's paying the price. Of course a good old-fashioned depression might sort things out in the short term, bankrupting all the newly rich dot.commers who've been colonizing the city, but that would probably be a case of the cure being worse than the disease. In the meantime, I'm clinging tenaciously to my own little Bay Area foothold, and I wish the best of luck to the many others who are trying to do the same.

The same sort of wishful thinking that threatens to strangle San Francisco seems to have insinuated itself into this year's elections. At least half the people I know are planning on voting for Nader on the grounds that both Bush and Gore are hopelessly corrupt. It's a tempting thought, I'll admit. Bush is a contemptible, unprincipled windbag who would take America on a blinding and destructive dash into the past, and perhaps the best that can be said about Gore is that he's not nearly as bad.

But does Nader represent a bold new beginning or merely another bout of wishful thinking? Nobody seriously suggests that he's going to be elected president, so his backers, whether they'll admit it or not, are willing to see Bush elected. Their reasons for this fall into two categories: either they think there's not enough difference between Bush and Gore to matter, or they're counting on Bush being such a bad president that people will become radicalized and start working for serious change in the system.

The first idea is debatable. Certainly there's not enough difference between Bush and Gore, and certainly Gore has been incredibly timid about standing up for principles that really matter. However, on issues like women's rights, the environment, and the economy, there are significant differences, and Gore mostly comes down on the right side. As for those who think a bad presidency will promote positive change, I need only refer to presidents like Nixon and Reagan, both of whom were elected because left-wingers decided their opponents (Humphrey and Carter) weren't radical enough.

In both cases the leftists were hoping for a powerful opposition movement to emerge, and in both cases it didn't happen. The actual result was that under Nixon a couple hundred thousand people, mostly Vietnamese, died in the war that Humphrey almost certainly would have ended soon after taking office. Reagan demolished America's social welfare system, threw millions of people out of work, lowered wages and quadrupled the national debt, and through all of that, the left, instead of growing stronger, dwindled into near-insignificance, its energy consumed in fighting mostly losing battles to hang on to some shreds of what had been accomplished in earlier, more progressive eras.

Does this mean I'm coming out foursquare for Gore? Not exactly. Like most of you, I'm frustrated and exasperated over the failure of our government to address obvious problems, impending environmental disaster being foremost among them. I'd like to

send a message to the politicians that things have to change, and drastically, but I'm not sure how electing Bush, a retrograde imbecile who's committed to burning more oil and doing away with what few environmental safeguards we do have, is going to help anyone.

In the same way that San Francisco frittered away much of its beauty and charm by refusing to deal with the realities of the modern world, a vote for Nader may be a well-intentioned flight into the realms of wishful thinking. Much of what Nader says about the environment is just good common sense, but even if he somehow got elected, he'd have no one in Congress to help him enact it. When it comes to matters like foreign or fiscal policy, he'd be a babe in the woods. To try and turn back the tide of globalization by abolishing NAFTA and GATT might provide a certain visceral satisfaction, but it would almost certainly plunge the world into a depression that rivaled or surpassed that of the 1930s.

The simple fact is that we don't always get an unlimited set of choices. Whether it comes to the job we work at, the school we study at, the neighborhood we live in or even the person we marry, we have to deal with the real as well as the ideal. Sometimes we have to go unhesitatingly for our dreams; sometimes we need the wisdom to see them for what they are: only dreams. I haven't yet made up my mind about who I'll vote for, and I'm not going to give up on my dreams. But I want to make damn sure that the dreams I live for have at least some chance of coming true.



No special control is needed to make people into pyramid builders—if they see themselves as having no choice but to build pyramids. They'll build whatever they're

told to build, whether it's pyramids, parking garages, or computer programs.

—Beyond Civilization, Daniel Quinn

In my old age I finally came to discover I have, in the diagnosis of our culture, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) of the Inattentive Type. How clever it all sounds when put down like that. Basically, I have processing "deficits" which can make successful social relations often difficult, and I have, as my university disability counselor puts it, "an ability to see things from a broad perspective."

Getting diagnosed meant a lot of important things to me. I began feverishly, and briefly, studying this so-called disorder and was pleased to find an article published in *The Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* that calls ADHD a disorder of adaptation. In other words, living the lifestyle of a member of a hunter-gatherer tribe gave somebody

with characteristics of ADHD prowess. Modern culture on the other hand labels it a deficit because its traits do not coincide with our lifestyle; rather, those who have ADHD have behavioral characteristics that are undesirable and problematic for a linear, mechanistic, technocratic lifestyle. Therefore, we medicate our "disorders," try behavior management and so on simply because ADHD characteristics are easier to treat with the individual because readapting the environment to the person with ADHD would mean fundamentally examining what it is our culture values and for what reasons.

Darn.

Of course, my diagnosis is psychological categorizing so that everything fits into a neat little pocket for which to be referenced later. I leave the importance of that process to the extent of the benefits from my new found disability as afforded me, realizing, of course, that when all is said and done, diagnosis means little. I feel a bit of what maybe a woman might feel like getting a scholarship—because she's a woman. Kind of like, "Yeah, that's cool, but is the fundamental problem really addressed here?"

Which is why I'm so fascinated with the Sudbury Valley School in Framingham, Mass, a school that fundamentally reconstructs the school environment by promoting self-directed learning. Oddly enough, I've had difficulty not telling people about the school knowing full well how threatening even mentioning a school like can be to some.

The always-brief discussion starts about like this:

Me: "The Sudbury Valley School has been around for over 30 years, they've produced professionals, college graduates, artists, musicians and so on—just like any other school. They have no curricula, no grades, no mandated classes and kids are generally free to learn how it is they want to learn, with 'learning' to be given a broad definition. Decision-making at the school is democratic, with children and staff each having equal vote in all policy matters. There's schools like this springing up all over the country, even other countries."

And the typical reply is: "Yeah, that sounds interesting, but kids need structure."

Or: "Yeah, that sounds interesting, but *that wouldn't work here.*"

Or: "Yeah, that sounds interesting, but *that wouldn't work for all kids.*"

It's all too common in this kind of conversation to seemingly validate what somebody is saying by feigning an interest in what you purported, add an interjection, and then completely invalidate it with statements that diametrically oppose the very idea one is presenting. It's a very kind way of saying: "Fuck your idea and the horse it rode in on (because it doesn't support my cognitive views)."

And I wish it were so simple, because it is not just cognitive dissonance that occurs when people are faced with something that is so unlike what they've been taught from day one. They not only reject it cognitively, they reject it with every ounce of their being.

With tense minds and bodies, the notion of surrendering to the simple idea that children, left to their own will, will find their way in the world without someone older than them exhibiting their control of will onto them is far too radical. Used to it from the day they were born, people want an illusion of control in the form of adult-constructed rules, mandates and laws. These are often politely clustered under the portentous notion of "structure," even when Sudbury Valley, despite its chaos in action view of learning, is indeed structured. So often I've sadly observed what I would normally consider bright and aware parents quickly restrict the environments of their children out of what amounts to not much else but fear.

On a deeper level, though, the idea of structure is really about control of one onto another. Our culture, based on hierarchies as it is, feeds itself with control, and each of us is a willful contributor to this process.

Of course the biggest offender in the education realm is the education system. By teaching its teachers that there is, actually, a one right way to learn, the idea that people can learn by their own devices is nearly outlandish. The cultural creed insists that children *must* learn in "structured" environments, *must* be taught by adults, *must* learn certain subjects, and they *must* not only conform to these standards, they *must* master them. When schools fail, the response is to toughen the standards, an odd approach considering in my formal training (I am in the process of completing a master's degree in education), we learn that when something doesn't work, don't do more of the same. Do something different. That the system itself is the problem, however, rarely seems to cross the institutional mind.

So I find Daniel Greenberg's idea of the Sudbury Valley School being a "cultural restoration project"² aptly described. Control, or the illusion thereof, as we enact it is a cultural construct. Our bodies express it, our minds especially and, most critically, our institutions. A place like Sudbury Valley on the other hand simply walks away from the convention to show that kids merely need to be who they intrinsically are, not who dominant institutions mandate they be. It's a careful realization, it seems, reading *Free at Last: The Sudbury Valley School*³, seeing how even the parents are often the ones most caught up in the institutional dynamics of control. Worried about a child's success, when one child spent years merely fishing day in and day out, for example, a parent grew increasingly concerned despite the fact that the child was content as could be. It wasn't until the child discovered computers one day that the school never heard an ounce of apprehension from the parent again. The student now owns a successful computer business.

Part of the school's success is how they measure success. By purposely ignoring the very core of our culture's value on things being structured and measurable, the Sudbury Valley School sees value in a child fishing all day long for years on end. They also believe children will move when they're ready to move, as a natural part of life. Sudbury's success is graduates who have to demonstrate to

their peers why they are now ready to be a contributing member to society. They become successful because they found within themselves their own measure of success, not one in which they conform to based on an outside perspective.

Needless to say, children with ADHD are said to have their "symptoms" go away fairly quickly when they attend a school like Sudbury Valley. When the ecology we live is fundamentally redirected, the individual often intrinsically adapts. On the other hand, when our ecology mandates a certain way things must be done, the individual, one who has difficulty with the adaptation, becomes the scourge, be they financially poor, mentally ill, addicted, abusive or racist. Because not all can fit into a prescribed system of standards, individuals get labeled as having deficits, disorders and so on.

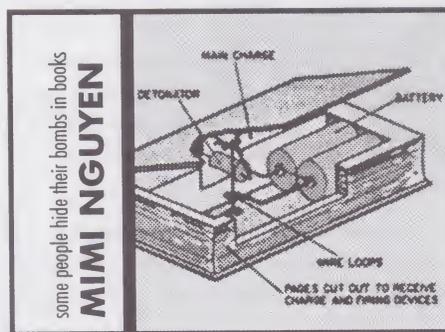
Take away the standards and amazing things begin to happen.

1. Jensen, P. S., Mrazek, D., Knapp, P. K., Steinberg, L., Pfeffer, C., Schowalter, J., & Shapiro, T. (1997). Evolution and revolution in child psychiatry: ADHD as a disorder of adaptation. *The Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 36 (12), 1672-1679.

2. See Greenberg, Daniel, (2000). *A Clearer View: New Insights into the Sudbury Valley School*. Available from the Sudbury Valley School Press, 2 Winch St., Framingham, MA 01701. pp. 117-138.

3. Greenberg, Daniel, (1995). *Free at Last: The Sudbury Valley School*. Available from the Sudbury Valley School Press, 2 Winch St., Framingham, MA 01701.

Issue 15 of Second Guess is still available: \$3.50 (US) ppd. to me at PO Box 9382, Reno, NV 89507-9382. It features an interview with author Daniel Quinn, and is only available by mail. www.secondguess.net



The following is something of a cheater column, because it's an edited excerpt from a keynote speech I gave at Over My Head: Feminist Interruptions

into Privilege, a March 2000 conference organized by NYU students who happen to also operate as Riot Grrrr! NYC in its most recent incarnation. There are references toward the end to parts I've left out in this version, since I've written about them (and at more length) in earlier issues of Punk Planet: about the uneven politics of sex as liberation (especially in a postcolonial world), and a response to a Punk Planet article suggesting that interracial eugenics would "correct" the so-called race problem in the United States. Having said that, the conclusion should make sense. I hope.

I want to tell several stories, besides the obvious ones with plots and characters and climatic scenes. The first admits to a motive. That is, it begins with my cynicism, my disappointment and often my anger. The reasons for which follow in the second story, which is as yet half-formed: it's the story of writing a critical analysis of a set of communities to which I ostensibly belong—whether riot grrrl, sex radicalism, the discipline of women's studies or other sites of feminist work. The third and most obvious story is about those communities and what gets circulated under the sign of "difference" there, and what gets to count as political labor. This is then a cautionary tale, one full of intrigues, promises, conflicts, and betrayals—just like any other war or more appropriately, just like any other affair.

I want to talk about my first punk rock love, a movement that emblazoned the letters "riot grrrl" across its bodily polemic and emerged in the early 1990s to seize the cramped space of public feminist discourse and reframe insurrection. Self-proclaimed provocateurs and "truepunkrocksoulcrusaders" of the revolution, riot grrrl converts called upon a collective imaginary to redesign the hostile world with the architecture of their private/public traumas and promises of girl-love wish-fulfillment. I was fifteen, punk rock and a junior in high school in 1991 when I first learned how to be worse than queer.

Riot grrrl *marked* the not-so-generic "whitestraight-punkboy" when it first delivered a good, swift kick to the masculinist punk paradigm, right where it counted most. Riot grrrl confronted the popular illusion of abstract punk membership and forced punk to examine its given categories of ex-/inclusion, to admit to the failures of punk's dominant realpolitick impulse—a by-product of the influence of the New Left. And while previous—and, I think, less radical—manifestations of feminist politics in punk went the way of assertions of equality, *riot grrrl made you look*. Infusing punk with a dystopian re-telling of rape, incest, and girl-girl intimacy, early riot grrrl production—in the form of the *fanzines*, the *performances*, and later the *conventions and workshops*—re-invented an exhibitionist feminist show-and-tell of sexual abuse and *complex* desire. Riot grrrl practiced an unabashedly *embodied* polemic, exercising an oppositional body politic that ruptured the foundation myth of punk egalitarianism.

Such that riot grrrl described itself as a culturally productive, *politicized* counterpublic, riot grrrl was—beyond a distinctive musical styling or the mere invasion of young, mostly white women in rock—an informal pedagogical project, a kind of punk rock "teaching machine." In fact, riot grrrl existed in and sometimes *replaced* the classroom as *the most meaningful context* for the transmission and production of knowledge among its body of participants.

That is, who listens to teacher when the cute pink-haired girl next to you might argue the same thing, but with a guitar and a *fanzine* in hand?

As such, riot grrrl political culture existed in a space of *intimate myth-making*, fusing academic and popular cultural discourses to elaborate a vision of potentially utopic feminist futures. And because it was a space of both social membership and intimate

relations, riot grrrl generated theory that ultimately seeks psychic resonance in everyday lives. What emerges is a very specific model of community-building where the political and the personal are collapsed into a "world of public intimacy," and citizenship can exact an emotional price.

This coupling of public testimony and private trauma is central to contemporary North American feminist politics, and riot grrrl was no different. The feminist movement suggestion that "the personal is political" was and *is* a transformative logic, one that radically reorders marginalized grievances as legitimate revolutionary agenda. Or speaking plainly, certain personal experiences, like rape, were made available to reinterpretation as social phenomena with histories and political consequences. This was—and is—still a radical concept that grounds politics in our everyday lives. Such that in the process of making their bid for political legitimacy, grrrls deploy their scars with the ultimate goal of creating an intimate, protected feminist community.

But here is where I want to reconsider what we meant when we said "community," "safe space," and of course, "the personal is political," because somewhere along the way, the utopian impulse broke down and something dangerous happened. See, the assumption of safety is all too often an assumption of *sameness*, and that *sameness* in riot grrrl—and in other feminist spaces—depended upon a transcendent "girl love" that acknowledged difference but only so far.

That is, in the process of translating the urgencies of political realities into *accessible* terms of personal relevance, a fundamental misrecognition occurs that ruptured riot grrrl's fabrication of a singularity of female/feminist community. It was assumed that riot grrrl was, for once, for the first time, a level playing field for all women involved, regardless or in spite of differences of class or race. But what became painfully clear, for those of us in the midst of the fray, was this: that the central issues was not one of merely acknowledging difference," but *how* and *which* differences were recognized and duly engaged.

In an essay about the new "management" of race in diversity-training workshops and some classrooms, South Asian feminist Chandra Mohanty writes, "The 1960s and 1970s slogan 'The personal is political' has been recrafted as 'The political is personal.' In other words, all politics is collapsed into the personal and questions of individual behaviors, attitudes, and life-style stand in for political analysis of the social. Individual political struggles are seen as the only relevant and legitimate form of political struggle."

And so at workshops held at numerous riot grrrl conventions all over the country, race and racism proved to be the stumbling block that most obviously—and heartbreakingly—threw the promise of "girl love" all askew. The move to act on "the political as personal" manifested in problematic ways: racism was addressed almost exclusively as an interpersonal dynamic of cross-cultural miscommunication or a lack of knowledge about "other cultures," and the specific "differences" of any one woman of

color stood in for the whole collective she is imagined to represent. Confessions were offered by white girls—they admitted to a lack of friends of color, pledged to work on their racism to become a better person—all of which made me, at least, feel claustrophobic. I wasn't sure if they wanted absolution or punishment, or both, and I didn't want to be responsible for either.

It exploded in 1995 or 1996 when in a zine called *Wrecking Ball*, two girls conducted an interview with one another that neatly "ate the Other," to paraphrase black bell hooks, taking the notion of "colonizing blackness" to new levels. Citing a "possible Ethiopian ancestor," a white girl shared with her riot grrrl reading public her decision to "claim" blackness. She then went on to speak about an "us" defined as "African people all over the world," ignoring the material privileges of being nationally and racially hegemonic. The emphasis here on a depoliticized "love"—she invokes the Sister Sledge hit and insists "we are family"—performs a kind of amnesia, disguised as something utopian, by abandoning an analysis or engagement with structural inequalities for a privatized, individualized solution and conservative-liberal platitudes about family, love, and humanity.

And when we objected vigorously and loudly and repeatedly, we met were with a stony wall of silence. (It's worth noting that the above white girl is still offering workshops to girl conventions about "challenging racism" to create "true human connection.")

These encounters—whether workshops, fanzines, or shows—were both a psychic drain and a political failure; in speaking of race and racism only in terms of personal and individual relevance, questions of history and social and structural inequality were reduced to manageable psychological scripts that too often cast girls of color into two-dimensional roles and "social change" a matter of behavioral and attitudinal adjustments. A friend of mine named Bianca Ortiz used to do a zine called *Mamasita* and in a piece called "educator/enemy," she wrote:

"I am sick of being the example, the teacher, the scapegoat, the leader, the half-Mexican girl in the group of 'allies' who either attempt to praise or destroy me, or both at once. I too often find myself in these rigidly defined roles, my whole life defined in over-simplistic terms; I am only educator or enemy."

While there is a more thorough history of riot grrrl to be written, I want to suggest that it was the difference of race—and to a lesser extent class—that confounded the overdetermination of utopian "girl love" fulfillment; that disrupted the curative importance embedded in the "neutral" quality of female empathy.

This was the first time I learned this lesson, but it wasn't the last.

What I do is by necessity a "politics of repetition," and so I tell these stories of love and war over and over. To pull at the thread that draws lines and makes connections between these seemingly disparate stories, I want to make a few observations. One, that these redemptive fantasies of "love" and sex avoid confronting complicity, privilege, and those discourses of power that are instrumental in creating these uneven conditions. They present themselves as witnesses to, or dreams of, racially unequal

subjects merging or becoming one, communicating lovingly in spite of the great chasm of inequality; but of course, neither "love" nor sex are neutral qualities but fields upon which battles for power and domination are fought.

Locating of the source of "oppression" and "change"—as girl love, interracial breeding, radical fucking, the desire to be one with the Other—in individuals suggests an elision between ideological and structural understandings of power and domination and individual, psychological understandings of power. So this is my very, very modest suggestion; that we cannot let all the complex and contradictory histories of love and sex, cultural production and social movements, political work and collective memory, dissolve into the murk of assumptions of safety or sameness, of personal revelation at the cost of political accountability. We have to conceive of our feminist politics as embodied and personal, but also strategically responsible and critically, importantly public.

After all, at some point in both love and politics, a girl has to take a few risks.

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You can reach the ladies of RGNYC at Bluestocking Bookstore, 172 Allen St., New York City, NY 10002, the only feminist bookstore on the island (of Manhattan, that is). The website is <http://www.bluestockings.com>, and they've got a packed schedule of events and an art gallery; or visit the messageboard at <http://www.panix.com/~shanny/rgny/>.

Good (zine) reads: *How To Stage A Coup* edited by Helen Luu, a compilation zine about people of color and subcultures. E-mail Helen at missruckus@hotmail.com for information on how you can get yourself a copy. *How To Stage A Coup* made Zine of the Month in *Maximumrocknroll* 210, so check out the interview. *Staging Historical Theft* by Athena Tan is like reading early bell hooks—if she was a Chinese-Filipina fifteen year-old feminist with postcolonial theory tucked into her back pocket. Contact Athena at 5338 Amorsolo St./Dasmariñas Vill./Makati City 1221/Philippines/athenat@info.com.ph.

As always, contact me if you're so inclined. Mimi Nguyen/POB 11906/Berkeley, CA 94712-2906/slander13@mindspring.com



When *Punk Planet* first started, they posted a call for submissions on the net. The post caught my eye for a few reasons...punk

and fiction. As a fiction writer who has associated myself with punk since the 70s, I was excited to see a punk magazine that

was interested in publishing fiction. *PP* accepted two, maybe three of my stories. They weren't especially "punk," I suppose. A story about a teenage girl on a Greyhound bus in a blizzard, a story about a restaurant dishwasher who drinks like a fish and has a crush on an exterminator. What's so punk about that? But somehow, it seemed to fit. *Punk Planet* was a perfect home for my stories. I've never been a big fan of the precious, high-brow world of literary magazines, and I suspect it wouldn't be terribly fond of me, either, though I never gave it very much of a chance to find out. I've always liked the idea of writing for a magazine that could just as likely be found in a record store as a bookstore.

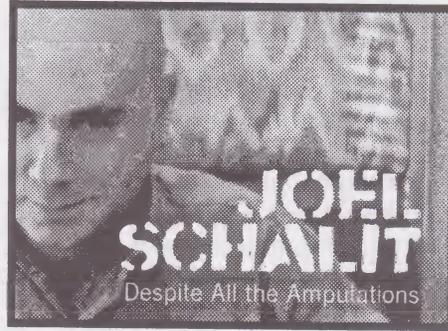
Shortly thereafter I started doing this column. I never sat down to write it without thinking, "I'm too old and I'm not punk enough." I swallowed that feeling and did the column anyway. That was something like six years ago and I'm considerably older and less punk now. But I'm still writing stories about the same kinds of people in the same kinds of places, which may or may not be punk. But this is why I love *Punk Planet*. It never told me I wasn't punk enough.

A "punker than thou" attitude, of course, tends to come with the territory. I certainly had one. It seemed simpler, then, though. It could just be how I remember it. But in rural New York State in the late 1970s, there were not so many degrees of punkness. That came later. No, in the beginning there was only punk and not punk. To borrow a phrase from the hippies, you were either on the bus or off the bus. Most of the people I hung out with didn't bother with fancy nail polish or high-maintenance hairstyles. Most of us were way too broke to afford the motorcycle jackets that became the punk uniform. Oddly enough, it was more about what you listened to than what you wore.

Not everybody I hung out with would call themselves punk. Some of my friends were really into punk music, and some were not. My boyfriend at the time was decidedly un-punk. But that didn't seem to matter very much. A lot of people didn't "get" it, and that was okay. Those people were actually rebelling in their own way, and looking back on it now, it doesn't seem all that different. We were all outsiders in one way or another. And that, ultimately, is what punk was about for me. Certainly, it's what attracted me to punk. I didn't (and still don't) hang with people who feel comfortable and at home in the mainstream. And that was (and still is) really the point.

It's been great doing this column, but it's time to move on and make room for somebody else. If you're a regular reader, stay in touch and keep your eyes on the fiction page.

E-mail me at elfez9@earthlink.net. Got fiction to submit? E-mail at fiction@punkplanet.com



I've always been the kind of person who has insisted on the necessity of being aware of historical coincidences because I've

always found a need to rationalize my own personal struggles in terms of the histories and the travails of others. Somehow, I've always figured, if I can find a greater narrative behind my own life's experiences, I might be able to shed more light on what they really mean. This doesn't necessarily suggest that like many progressive, political types, I have the tendency to extrapolate greater political significance from my personal life than is really there. What it does mean is that for ethical reasons I try and interpret those events that I experience privately as being embedded in a larger web of relationships and histories in which the personal and the political, or in this case, the past and the present, overlap.

I started to reflect upon this as I sorted through my email one cold and rainy morning at the end of November. Sipping my coffee, I petted my ex-girlfriend's cat and hit the delete button on hundreds of useless letters from various newsgroups that I somehow end up of having other people subscribe me to. I only began to hesitate when I started to see letters whose headings dealt with the upcoming World Trade Organization demonstration in Seattle, and parties being held in Europe to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall.

One email I read advertised ride shares up to the demonstrations. Another informed me of an electronic music happening in Berlin, next to the remains of the former wall. Thinking to myself that there was something ironic about the juxtaposition of these notes in my mailbox, I saved them, imagining these letters to be the cyber-equivalent of a consciousness raising collage of unintended juxtapositions that helped illuminate one another. Somehow, they were intended to exist side by side, as though they were an instant political art installation.

Later that week, as reports began to filter in about the growing melee in Seattle, I couldn't help but go back to these emails. I thought it all too telling that on the tenth anniversary of the West's triumph, free market economic structures would be put on such public trial. The problem was that the protests against the WTO weren't framed in such a historical light. Indeed, media attention on commemorations of the end of the Cold War and its aftermath immediately gave way to coverage of the violence overtaking the World Trade Organization meeting without reference to anything else. This troubled me, but it made perfect sense given how little historical perspective is ever expressed in American media culture, from CBS Evening News and

60 Minutes to All Things Considered, Pacifica Radio and beyond. They're all infected with the same illness. It's called a lack of perspective.

Nonetheless I was overcome with joy at the coincidence unfolding before me because I knew that I hadn't missed it. What better a way of commemorating the end of the longest world war ever than a massive demonstration against global capitalism? However, I couldn't help but feel anxious about it because the uprising was not presented in such an ironic light by the new emerging left. The only historicization of the event that anyone ever engaged in was to draw up the inevitable comparisons to the street violence of the 1960s, almost as though history had been at a standstill for nearly thirty years, and was now, like a trauma victim suffering from repetition compulsion, being allowed to reassert itself as a return of the so-called repressed.

I couldn't stop myself from reacting negatively to such comparisons because the revolutions that began sweeping the world in 1989 were far more important to this generation than the failed revolts of thirty years earlier. Why? Because the new radicals were issuing a historical verdict on the world created by the Cold War's winners. Instead of agitating on behalf of the creation of democratic political structures, (like Eastern Europe's eclipsed revolutionaries once did,) those demonstrating against the injustices of globalization were protesting against what Marx once prophesized as being the inevitable withering away of the state. Instead of criticizing Western imperialism like their sixties forbears, radicals were now calling for an end to the unregulated world markets that have emerged ever the more forcefully since the collapse of state socialism.

However, that's just the tip of the iceberg. The protests against the WTO demonstrated that the activist left was in the process of ideological realignment as well. It's increasingly anarchist leanings, with its emphasis on the decentralization of revolutionary organizations and its radical anti-statism, could only emerge in a political context in which the predominant form of twentieth century anti-capitalism—Marxism—had been discredited. After decades of anti-Communist purges, the evisceration of the labor movement, the former Soviet Union's justifiable bad rap and the rise of a variety of ostensibly post-anti-capitalist 'isms'—feminism, environmentalism, and multiculturalism, a new consciousness of class emerged that couldn't be easily discredited for its complicity with totalitarianism as socialism once was. As much as I felt nervous about its pronounced distance from Marxist inspired anti-capitalisms, this had to be done in order to resuscitate a publicly acceptable critique of free market economics. The new anarchism has to be partially thanked for that.

Indeed, anarchism is the new radical chic, and not just because it finds itself in the enviable position of defining the intellectual vanguard of the new left at the right time, when it

seems like it's the system itself that is inherently unreformable. Anarchism's increasing popularity has everything to do with the fact that it has deeper, counter-cultural roots in American society than socialism does right now, because for better or for worse, it's so closely identified with the counter-cultural mainstream, i.e. punk rock. Since the early eighties, countless political hardcore bands, record labels and publishing houses both in Europe and in America have seen it as their mission to propagate such ideologies through their recordings and publications. That can't be discounted when trying to figure out where this new explosion of anti-free market politics is coming from.

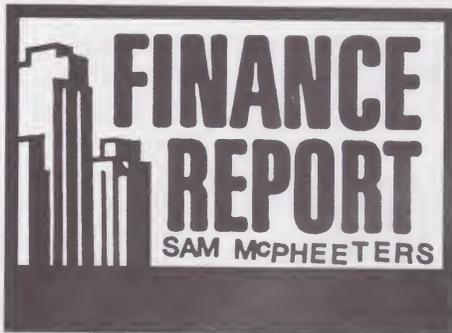
Nonetheless, I can't call myself much of an authority on anarchism. I never took it all that seriously. I've always been alienated by anarchism's more superficial, fundamentalist leanings, especially its often cited critique of technology, its hostility towards large state structures, and the fact that I cannot find any cultural affinity for it in my own personal history. Having been raised in an old fashioned Labor Zionist household, I was reared with a strong faith that the state could work correctly if it was only run by the right people who had the right values. I can't say that I haven't increased my own personal sense that it's possible to reform the liberal democratic state either, particularly when non-governmental organizations like the World Trade Organization and the IMF assume governmental-like functions without necessarily declaring themselves to be necessarily doing so.

In the absence of progressive control of governing institutions of any kind—local or international, statewide or federal, the wrong people will always rule, and they'll always develop forms of government which will not only be all encompassing, but also large. My fear for the future of the left is that it will distinguish its increasing hatred of the state from a growing sense that it's simply illegitimate because the wrong people always control it. Like it or not, if we give up on it, the state's functions will only become increasingly privatized, i.e. assumed by unelected bodies which are even further beyond reproach than the current system of governing structures already is.

That doesn't mean we have to give up the struggle against private property. Or forget the totality of radical philosophies, which teach us that capitalism is morally illegitimate and contrary to the democratic political principles. What the current revival of traditions like anarchism does mean is that we have to recommit ourselves to the idea that the left has to study its past, not just react to the present on its own terms, with all of its corruption and seeming intractability. We have to help resuscitate ideas and ideologies that never got their proper due, like anarchism, like Marxism, in order to forge a truly responsible revolutionary synthesis. At this point in time, anything less than that will simply lead to yet another brief flower-

ing of progressivism which scholars and intellectuals in the future will see as just another necessary cyclical movement to the left before returning to the mythical and life-denying American center again.

While I don't have much faith in this not happening, there is much liberation to be found in the plurality of traditions of radical thinking that have accumulated during the course of the past hundred years. The most important value that I personally derive from last century's left, despite its disappointments, despite its shames, is that its still possible to become intimate with all of it, because history never makes anything that's never been totally tried or perfectly implemented its own private property. That's my freedom. And it's one I think that we all share.



Blind Trust, Pie Fraud and Space Weiners

Smart businesses maintain cash reserves for emergencies. Businesses run by

bozos, as is mine, have scheme reserves...when times get tight, previously ridiculed fundraising plots get dusted off for fresh inspection. A few years back, for example, a lease on a cheap and charmingly decrepit office space required that I buy one million dollars in liability insurance (about \$11 a month to cover me in the event of a UPS driver pulling a knuckle joint on my doorknob and suing myself and the establishment out of existence). One afternoon, reading over the insurance document with my lone employee, we discovered that the insurance covered lawsuits resulting from acts of "defamation, slander, harassment and humiliation" and came up with what is looking more and more like a credible business plan; on videotape, I order my employee to drop his pants, then smash him in the face with a pie and howl with laughter. He sues, an outraged jury awards the humiliated employee the million (after deductible) from my insurance company and we split the winnings down the middle. Although the scheme would probably result in a rate hike, it could be worth the risk. "Humiliation" is a hard thing to disprove—in essence, my intentions would need to be gauged, and there's no exit port for these intentions but whatever comes out of my mouth.

In August, GOP vice presidential candidate Dick Cheney accepted a choice retirement package, certain points of which are making me misty for that pie fraud scheme all over again. For

services rendered to Halliburton, the Texas based oil services company he's served as chairman and chief exec these last five years, Dick walks away with \$20 million in stocks and cash, instantly doubling his paper worth. A few editorials cried foul at the general, big-picture unfairness of the payout (thousands of employees were laid off during Cheney's watch), but of course the story is so legal and routine in today's economy that it doesn't go far except maybe as exhibit 884-J in the ongoing, stupefyingly obvious epic of US campaign finance corruption. But wrapped up in Cheney's bonus is a puzzle distantly related to my proposed humiliation lawsuit. How would a hypothetical vice president Cheney handle the conflict of interest? How can the man's true intentions be gauged?

To handicap their immense advantages in contacts and insider information, high level public officials are bound by strict laws when reentering the business world—usually lag times of one to five years before starting at any company whose interests intersect with their old post. Rules are murkier when someone travels in reverse, from business back into government. The "Chinese Wall"—procedures used by investment firms to avoid illegal use of inside information—grows much more complex in an org as large and ridiculous as the U.S. government (statement of disclosure: I encountered the Chinese Wall in 1988 during a very tense 37 minutes of employment on Wall Street as a "cold caller," a job whose description still eludes me. My new boss took me aside and, in hushed tones, pointed down two hallways; left for soda machines, right for "off-limits, sensitive information that won't be in the Wall Street Journal until tomorrow morning" I nodded reverently, veered left, bought my Pepsi and sprinted in disorientation out of the building). The president and vice president, for example, are required by law to address any conflicts arising from their financial holdings, usually by establishing a "blind trust"—someone else handles their investments and doesn't give them any details. If Clinton knows not that he owns 800,000 shares of Exxon, the theory goes, the less likely he'll be to manipulate national policy to influence the value of those shares (although this first family allegedly waited 6 months before setting up their own blind trust).

Bush says both candidates would set up blind trusts if elected, which is nice because they'll have to on account of they're both mega-rich. Cheney says he'll sell his stock if he gets elected. But not until then, which already gives us some insight. Even issues raised on the campaign trail can theoretically affect stock prices that can affect how much money this guy gets. Cheney's candidacy is one of the most conflict of interest seeped in the last half century...if you don't count Perot (whose company wasn't publicly traded) or Forbes (on the grounds of his being a mutton barely able to propel himself about under his own volition), we have to dig back to Wendell Willkie's entanglements with utility companies in

1940. But Cheney's pretty versed in this stuff. He's already profited hugely off US foreign policy he himself was responsible for—grateful Saudi and Kuwaiti sheiks "saved" by then-Defense Secretary Cheney's prosecution of the Gulf war welcomed Dick with open arms on recent lobbying trips. Halliburton, a company that was pulling in hundreds of millions before his arrival, was working in the billions by this summer. War gave Cheney "clout," one of the great unquantifiables. How much more clout will his candidacy bring? And Big Oil (of which Halliburton is a component, although not an actual oil company itself) also operates with its own interests. Playing dual sides of the fence, both domestically (Cheney lobbied for and won the \$900,000,000 Kosovo cleanup contract from the Clinton administration last year) and abroad (Cheney lobbied on behalf of lifting sanctions to oil rich "despot countries" Iran and Libya—although not on behalf of Cuba which, after all, can only offer us sugar—and has at times had to align himself with OPEC's price hikes, supporting a massive monopoly that'd be illegal under US antitrust laws) is part of Cheney's background. Bush W.'s main advisor Karl Rove took \$150,000 from Philip Morris while dishing up the counsel, and Rove's shrug-off of any apparent conflict of interest sums the mode—Bush and Rove "never discussed it", case closed. Perhaps, perhaps not. We'll never know—that's the beauty of conflicts of interest. In essence, Cheney's intentions are what needs to be gauged, and there's no exit port for these intentions but whatever comes out of Cheney's mouth.

Weird questions of causality pop up. Al Gore receives \$20,000 in royalties off a Tennessee zinc mine every year, an amount too small to trigger a blind trust since it reflects such a small fraction of worldwide zinc output. But if a hypothetical President Gore invaded zinc-rich Namibia and inched US zinc prices that much higher, would we really be able to gauge his full intentions? Punchline: the Gores own 25 times that amount in Occidental Petroleum stocks. Even Ralph Nader owns over three million dollars in technology stocks, companies whose fortunes could be deftly manipulated in a series of lunchtime phone calls from the office he seeks (statement of disclosure: I was fired from Nader's NY Public Interest Research Group in 1986 after a very tense 3 days of employment and the episode has left a hardened kernel of rage in my heart for all time). Nader was actually accused of conflicted interests 30 years ago when he issued a report blasting an IT&T merger, then profited off IT&T stock he sold short two days before the merger was approved. "Mere coincidence" he told a reporter, which is accused corporation shorthand for Prove It. This will be my mantra during the civil case against my alleged acts of humiliation, and when an enraged attorney thrusts a copy of this very column in my face I'll huff "mere coincidence." Nearby, a single tear will silently roll down my humiliated employee's cheek.



rip it up.

jessica
hopper

So, I did good. As part of my new plan/personal dare unto myself to be nice AND helpful as much as I have the opportunity to—I

was totally friendly, to strangers, this evening. I don't know how it happened but it did. I was stone cold lampin behind the merch table for Har Mar and these young punx, (who were there to see the Men's Recovery Project, who cancelled), were perusing the back of the club mini-avenue of DIY commerce. Six of the 'fore mentioned punx had driven from Kenosha, Wisconsin. Their looks were all various stages of rural punk—i.e., the best you can do with what you got, which is usually the clothes you already had before you heard whatever changed your life last month. Button down church shirts with "fuk racism" written in sharpie marker and the sleeves cut off, you know the look. They were 19 but looked 14-17 for the most part. You could tell all six of them were likely the lone rebels of Kenosha, forced to run in a pack by virtue of being outcasts in cheese country.

They were sufficiently bummed about the 4 hour drive. Since there were no screamo-wave icons to see, I chatted them up, telling 'em it was worth the stay for the other bands. The pitch: "Are you a fan of R. Kelly or Jay-z? Then you will most definitely appreciate Har Mar. It's all booty jams. No, I'm all the way serious. I know it's on Kill Rock Stars, but trust me, it's straight up R&B—with a mid-set costume change even. What other one-man band wears a cape? How about this—I bet you 10 cents it's the best show you'll see all month, and certainly more fun than driving back to Kenosha." The hard sell left one interested party at the table. I asked him if he was there to see Men's Recovery because of Men's Recovery or because of Sam being in Born Against. Both, he says. I tell him if he likes weird music, he should stay, because the band after Har Mar was touted as two older ladies singing poetry with a light up organ and drums. I asked him if ever reads *Punk Planet*. he said he's never even heard of it. "Never? Ever?!" So, I gave him the web address and information on how to get it online, or at least so that someone will try and make sure that you can start buying it in Kenosha. "It's the best magazine about punk rock ever. Yr Born Against dude even does a column. And it actually covers good music and the people are real writers, with open minds, unlike Maximum. Maximum will make you dumber, you should watch out...(mindful of my inner-pact to be slightly less of a ummm, big mouthed bitch and more of a share-my-world kind of bitch, is quickly put my train back on the tracks).... If you can't get it online, just email me, I will send you one. It will save you from Midwestern

hell." So, He stayed for Har Mar and true to my promise—loved it and was indeed entertained and proud of it, all in spite of the annoyed, eye rolling pleas of the majority of the Kenosha True Til Death Posse or whoever they were.

His pal (with the skunk dye job & the pants made entirely of Chaos UK patches (he gets an A for effort, D- for execution and choice of band), who had a particularly bad attitude, insisted I owed him 10¢ because Har Mar's special brand of smooove sexstyle was not for him. I told him if he had an open mind and better attitude, perhaps took a cue his friend's example, he not only would of had a better time, but also of gotten a free magazine in the mail from me. See, while I may be short, I'm 23, so, by virtue of "I am older" law, I can act bossy to a 20 year old, under the guise of distributing my "wisdom."

Gentle Segue Into Semi-Related Tangents:

I am trying harder. Trying to transition into being a nicer, graceful lady rather than a bossy, pissy kid (an attitude which while is great at parties and all, I think I don't wear it so well anymore). This means I am also trying to be mindful of that most-heinous of steezes, being careful not to accidentally recline into THAT fur-lined rut, you know—the *old-before-yr-time, back-in-the-day, steady-stream-of-bullshit-n'-nostalgia, hater*. My first three jobs were as a record store clerk, so trust, girl, it's a war I must wage in the most inner emo-self way—to not be the prickliest of pricks, still hanging tuff after 476 years in the indie-ground but rocking that scorched earth mentality that everything is shit nowadayz and conducting oneself like the privilege of an extensive collection of old Homestead singles some how elevates one beyond the rest of humanity. To paraphrase the Plastic Constellations—I slay that dragon with my sword-ass bullets. I hate that shit because *I came from that school of thought* for longer than I care to elucidate here. I know firsthand that that well is shallow and it smells like ass and that if I truly wanna stick around these parts and be true to my school, I better knock that shit off best I can. So, after much searching—I think I have seen the light and...well...it is third wave emo from Pennsylvania. Oh, nooooo. Just teasing, just teasing, I promise...OK, bring the beat back: I am who I am and am doing what I am doing because some cool older punk types I was exposed to back when I was just a baby punk showed me good examples, opened my mind to a lot of rebel sounds and told me the right and wrong way of doing things. Like how it is any community/surrogate family, I suppose, but I think there is some things getting in the way I think, in the last few years, some things that I think erode at the community. (I am only going to touch on them, because this is a tangent a million miles wide, which you can read about extensively in *Hit it or Quit it 16* (out in early 2001) ahem)). The things that I think are currently/potentially negatively impacting our music/publishing/creative punk rock monkey barrel are as such:

1. Careerism. This was brought like a plague to the underground by the infusion of major label money sometime in the treacherous mid nineties, and was an idea that, I think, was/is inherently foreign, and anti-thetical to notion of the underground. Meaning we're not supposed to play by the other teams rules and measure ourselves with their maggot-infested yardstick of right/wrong/good/bad/success/failure.

2. Faddishness in music/lack of longevity: similar as I said in point one. I feel in my gut and see with this blazing clarity that there exists this notion of like, if yr band/record doesn't get this x-amount of attention and sales and signifiers of establishment attached to them then yr expected to like, go out to pasture, that there is a meta-text of not only an expiration date for sounds and styles, but that this ephemeral cycle is "how it is". Dude... Husker Du, Black Flag—they made like what, 8 records? Superchunk, Fugazi, Unwound, Avail—they've all managed lengthy, inspiring careers on their own terms. Meanwhile, I have a tough time naming any band in the last 5 years to manage to make it to album three. (And I do not know if that's because since 1994 or so there was just this floodgate that opened, and people everywhere started releasing their own albums, and thusly the marketplace is a million times more competitive). I think all this is also hand in hand with the amount of bands that have a look/gimmick/adherence to aesthetic, which oft seems to proceed things like ummm songwriting, and I don't remember really seeing very much of that until the last 2-3 years. Musicians having to have this trick to distinguish themselves (this means you, cocaine n' blowdryer, new-ro chic mongers of the entire west coast) is a particularly sad and frequently demoralizing thing for both audience and performer, and I feel it plays straight in to the hands of the application of "15 minutes and 15 minutes only" that I am ranting about here.

3. Giving away your power as a signifier of success: Many bands I know have management, booking, publicists. Some of them "need" them, most do not. I think a lot of younger bands believe that having people work on your behalf is a validation—as in "Well, we have all the machinery that Sleater-Kinney do"—and thusly, yr that much closer to legitimate, that much closer to "true success" and thusly THE BIG TIME/a career/elusive fools gold of fame, etc., etc. I hear more and more bands who refuse to put out their own records, instead vying for a spot with an "established" label before taking any steps on their own besides, like, playing shows in their hometown. I think this is lazy and also totally dangerous—rather than learning how things work and having an understanding of what goes in the different aspects of your bands life, you have to trust that people aren't feeding you a line of shit and pissing people off, on behalf of your band, in the process of "facilitating growth" in yr...uh, career.

Recently, I have watched a band that I really, really care about, who put in years of hard work in the underground,

with defined and reasonable success (in my opinion), negate much of it by going very much above ground, to a major label, in a major way. They have all the machinery in place, in spades, which perhaps will carry them to the golden, gleaming and hallowed shores of corpo-rock, some nice bin placement at Wal-mart and perhaps, in the future, their very own episode of Behind the Music. Much of their fate's in the hands of everyone but them, despite their insistence to the contrary. And the whole times I watch from the sidelines wondering what next? And why? (Aside from, yeah it's nice to maybe be able to support yrself with your art, maybe make it out of the ghetto if you are lucky, and you know, different strokes for different folks and if that's what's really going to make them happy, more power to them...that said). I asked myself why why why do people do this over and over even though the freshest of the recruits to punk rock can tell you from a mile away, that more often than not, certain things, ie. engaging with the mainstream, is often a recipe for TROUBLE.

I read yesterday that only 94 of 1% of all albums released in the US last year went platinum. Only 10% sold over 10,000 copies (a fair amount on indies). Now, this aforementioned band, their advance from the major record label, it was a good chunk of money for any artist, really. More money than most will ever make of art. But, I can tell you this much—It wasn't near what a (consistently touring) band I know who sells 30,000—some odd copies of a release on an independent label that gives them a 50/50 profit split makes. And they make it every year, or whenever they put out a record, not just in some money-shot one-time injection. And for what does this aforementioned bands negate their years of hard underground work for? Some distant what-if shot in the dark, and hey, if it works out, maybe they can get some plush white carpeted condo for their moms and a picture of them and Eric Clapton in the Random Notes section of *Rolling Stone*. I don't care if you sound like the punkest punk band that ever punked, I feel like once you become part of that machinery, once you pass the reigns from your hands to the hands of those whose job it is to "make things happen" at any cost, it doesn't matter if you are a band of people, Nikes, a case of Pepsi or adult fucking diapers, you are a product, a construction to be consumed, a signifier of a lifestyle, something to be projected on, and you have little if ANY control of ANY of this.... (Perhaps, it's bit murkier and greyer than this black and white as I see it. Best believe—I used to see it as grey and greyer, and to mix some metaphors here, you stick your fingers in the flame enough—you figure out you get burned.)

I feel like maybe these things wouldn't happen so tragically often, and we don't keep having to lose the good bands to the suits and the sharks and the cell phone playas, if maybe bands follow some examples laid down for them just a few years back.

I know I sound like some wind up Indie Rock Dogma Patty doll, pull the string on my back and I'll spit at you from high atop my soap box til the four horseman of the apocalypse ride the earth...but, perhaps, you too, like me, often have thoughts like "How many more Fugazis do we need for people to get it?" or "How many more great bands do we lose to major labels, who subsequently get dropped and break up and all hate each other and never make music again before people learn that that kind of commerce and our kind of art don't fucking mix?" But, perhaps, you too, like me, had yr life changed and saved by a record a band and a show. Or like me, every week you have a new favorite band, a new favorite record. Or like me, this is the world you feel safest and most part of, and this music and these people involved in it—these people who you are bonded to through shared record collections and stupid haircuts and righteous ideals, all this is *your life*. And this is all why all we do what we do, and this is how we do it, and this is why you are reading this magazine, and this is why I am writing in it, and perhaps, that you too think this is fun and rad and salvation and get just as bummed out as I do when corporate doom comes and leaves a paper bag of burning shit on the front porch of our clubhouse for us to come and stamp out.

Second Verse

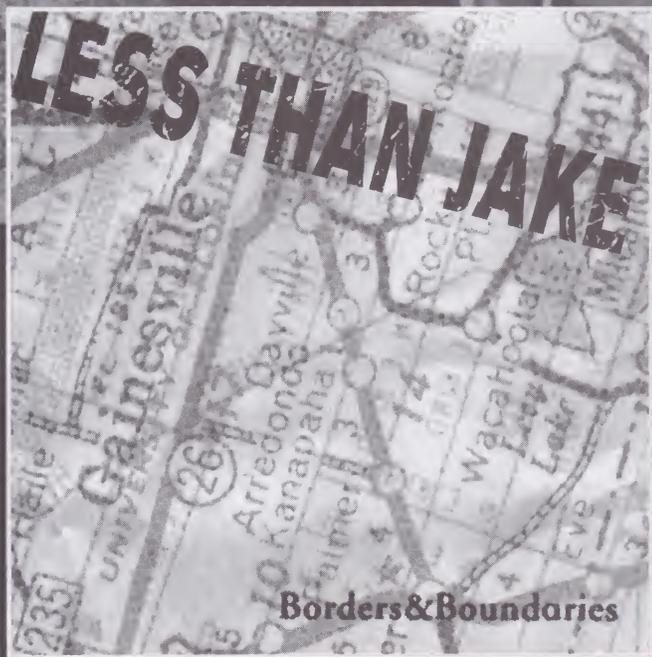
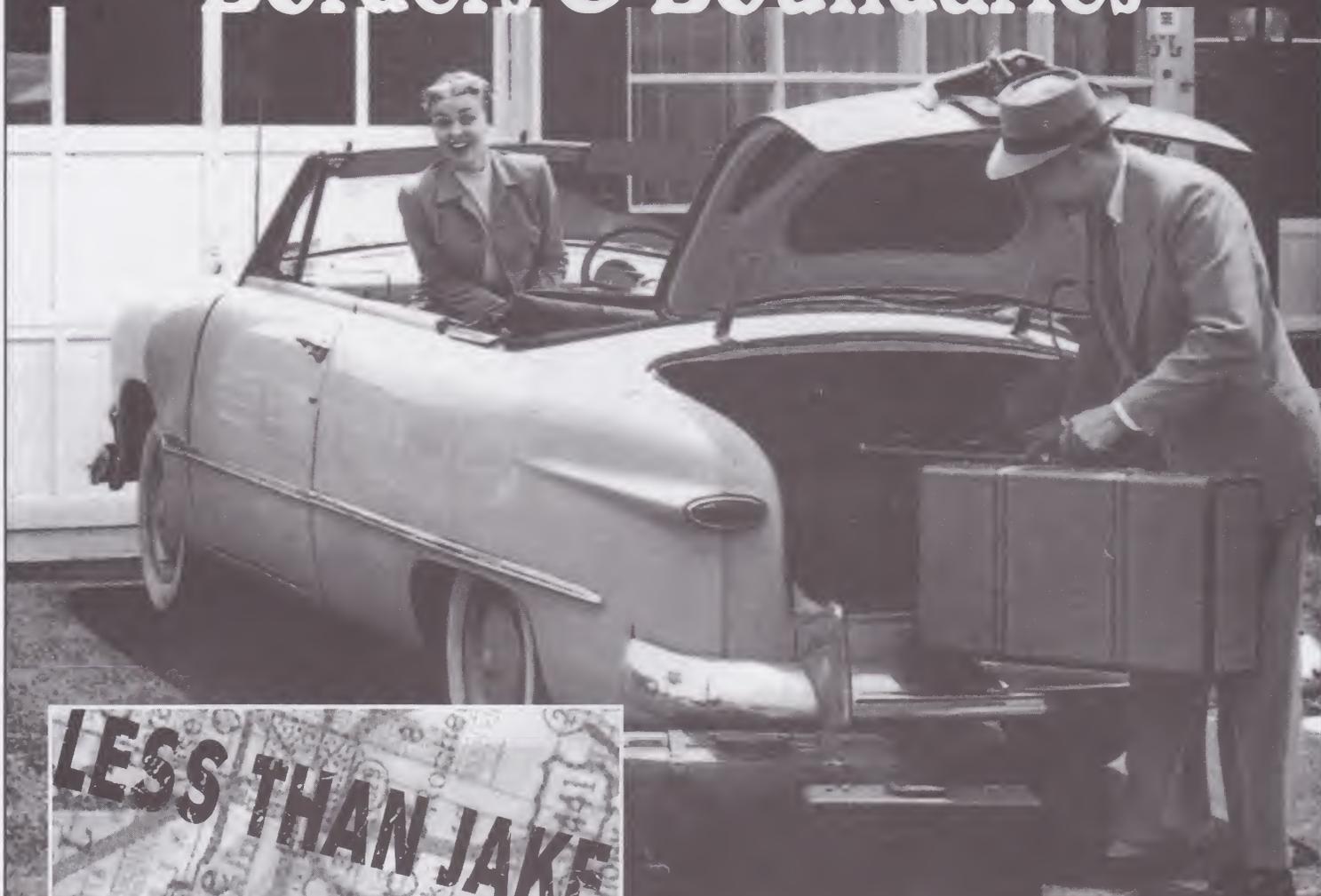
Despite the fact that it'll be almost Xmas by the time YOU read this—despite that it's August as of this writing, here's what kicked mad summer jams:

1. Insound zine conference
2. Babysitting three baby chickens
3. Being infuriated enough by the presidential debates that I am actually planning on voting, and voting Nader, thank you.
4. Amazing new records from Primal Scream, The Fucking Champs, Sabado Gigante, Pedro the Lion, Town and Country EP, Explosion, Seeing the Rapture live and growing disco-wings, Black Dice, Getting turned on to every proto-funk essential recording I ever need Liquid Liquid, ESG, the first Pylon record, Ike and Tina "Nuff Said", Plastic Ono band, Femi Kuti in Central Park, and my first Ebay purchases (Dog Faced Hermans CDs!!)
5. The return of the other JH, Josh Hooten and the birth of mixtapewebzine.com.

Email me! Mcfrenchvanilla@yahoo.com Write me on paper: po box 14624 Chicago, IL 60614

LESS THAN JAKE

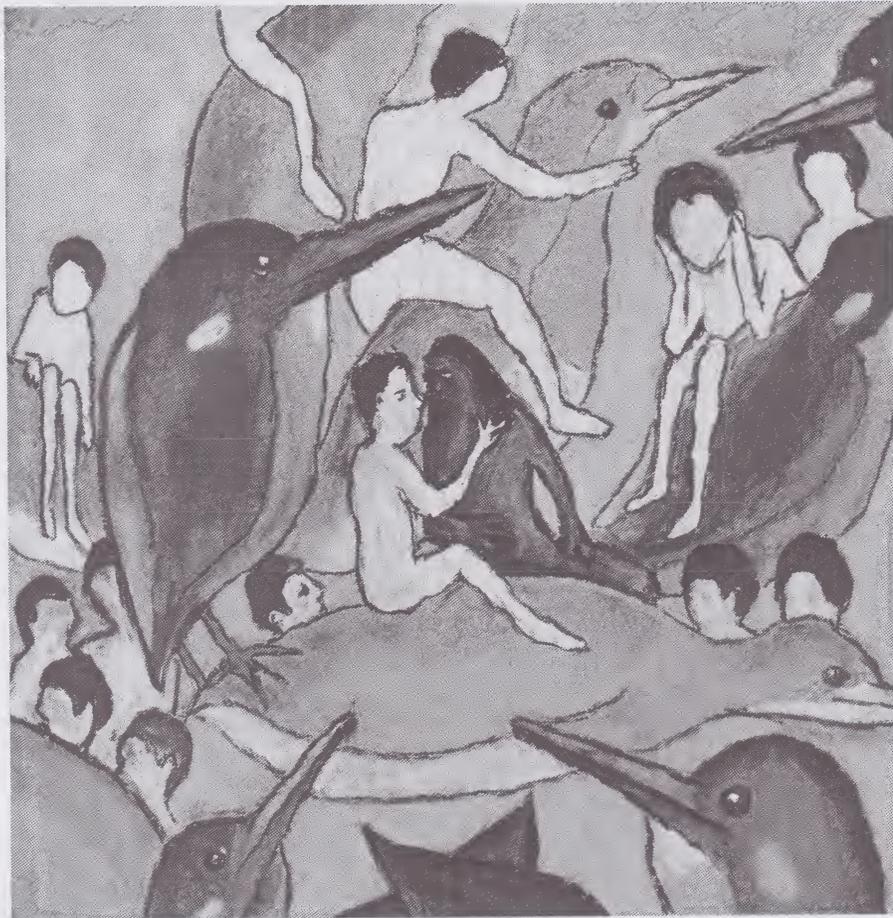
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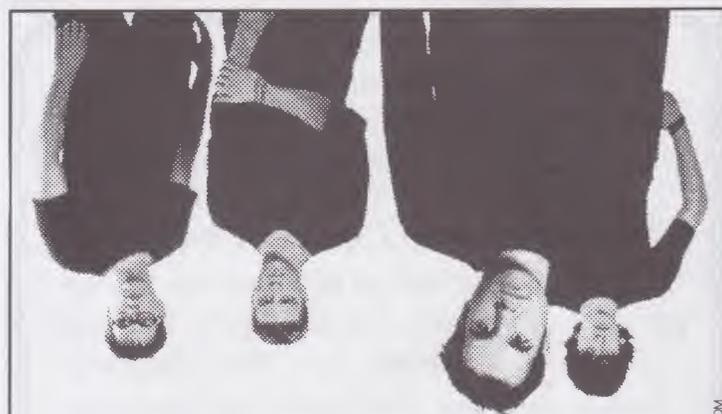
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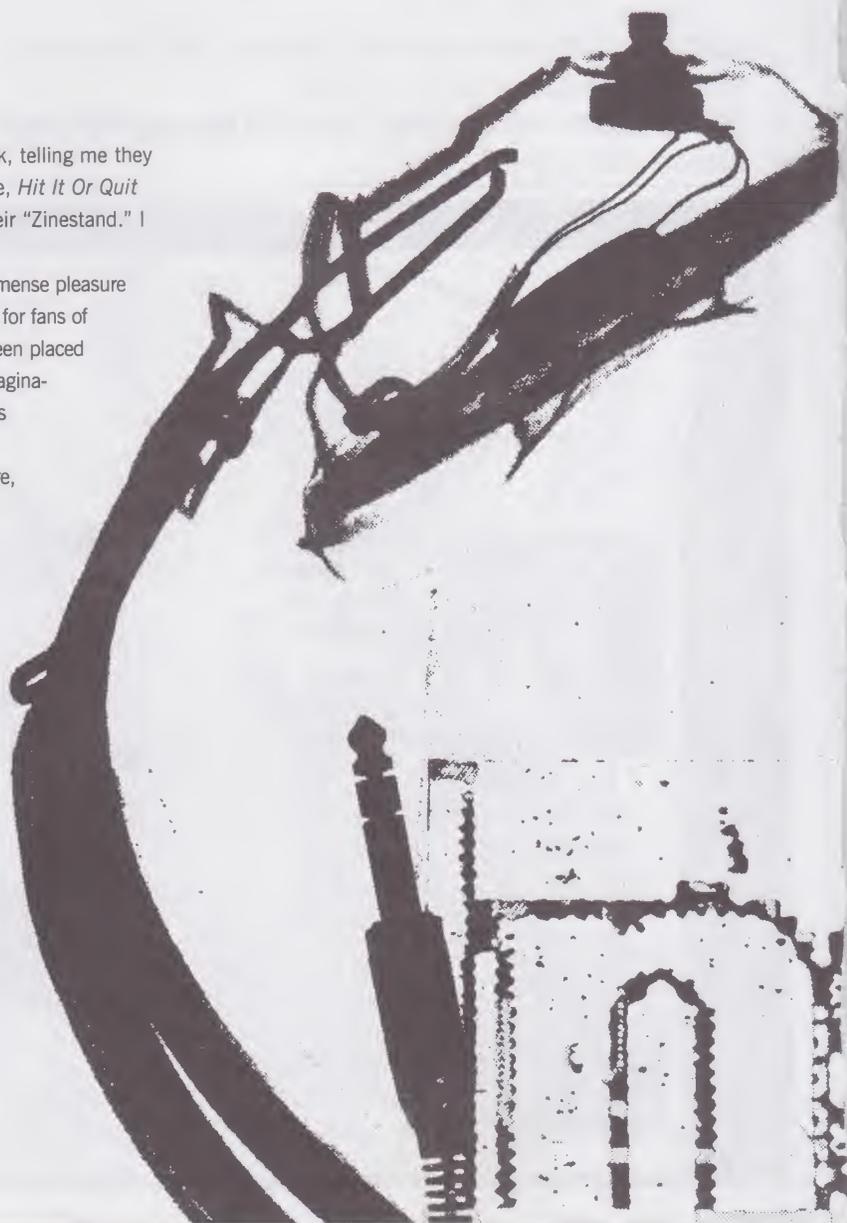
Two years ago, I got a letter from some strangers in New York, telling me they wanted to help me out. They said that they liked my fanzine, *Hit It Or Quit It*, and that they wanted to put it up on their web site in their "Zinestand." I told them that it was cool, and have never regretted it since.

Those strangers run a site called Insound and it has been an immense pleasure watching this little company grow over the years into a utopian haven for fans of independent music. During an era in which so much emphasis has been placed on using the Internet as an alternative sales venue for otherwise unimaginative music by record companies, distributors and retailers, Insound has proven that taking a different approach pays off. What turned me on about Insound is that while they were essentially an online record store, they were also much more than that. Making available everything from small fanzines and books from independent publishers to downloadable videos, arranging chats with the smallest of bands and, of course, selling CDs, Insound was offering itself as a portal to underground culture in a manner that no other commercially-oriented music web site has so far managed to do.

This summer, Insound organized a day long zine conference in NYC, complete with panels about zines, films about zines and a zine/book supermarket, followed by a rockin' three band bill. Afterwards, I wondered how we ever got along without them.

I got a chance to speak with Insound founders Matt Wishnow and Ari Sass during a calm moment in the weekend's festivities.

Interview by **Jessica Hopper**



How did Insound start?

Matt: Ari and I were friends who worked together at Elektra Records. Ari used to spend his days smoking in the office, throwing CDs at the wall and breaking them. He had a numbers job and I had a crappy gig in marketing. We would have meetings and just talk about music we liked. At that time, we were really into garage rock. We talked about doing something together, either a label or a store, but not both.

Ari: This was '96 and '97. At the time the only online places to buy CDs were CDNow and Music Boulevard. When we'd go to those sites to buy music, the front page would feature records like the *Titanic* soundtrack. It was a real turnoff, but we had no alternatives.

Did you guys have a lot of interest at the time in music technology and the Internet?

Matt: Totally not.

Ari: I liked the information access part of the Internet, but otherwise no

Matt: We were just starting to hear about bands like The Promise Ring and Hot Water Music, and we knew we could find out more about bands like them by going online and discovering information about them. We knew that there other people like us who were interested in the same things. It seemed to us that with little cost and few resources we could put something together simply based on our common interests.

Ari: We knew that people who like underground music would find us, because they,

like us, hate being marketed too, and prefer to search things out. We knew we wouldn't have to spend a zillion dollars on push marketing.

Matt: We were both mailorder shoppers and used to waiting weeks for something we ordered out of the back of a zine. We hoped—and figured—those other people had access to technology and would use it to find zines or 7"s.

Your proof was yourselves. Being typical indie music fans, you guys were the subject of your own market research.

Matt: It was 99 percent gut instinct.

Ari: That's why it worked. At the time everyone had to have this big business plan about how they'd take over the Internet, and how they were going to reach 50 million people. They were looking to get *everybody*, they weren't thinking under the radar. But we thought that we could be very niche and survive by focusing on people like ourselves who weren't being catered to.

At what point did you say, "Okay, lets do this Internet thing? Lets make it a place where people can find out about and buy new music?" What happened next?

Matt: In late 1997, we all started meeting regularly about our project. Ari started finding out about distribution, direct fulfillment and working with distributors. We knew we could offer a lot of different albums by connecting with distributors, but we wanted to give people a more compelling reason to check it out. We didn't want it to be a hobby. A lot of people who do businesses keep this

division between their life and their interests, but for us it was more like "Okay, we're combining the two: our hobby will become our lives and our business."

Were you looking to exit the corporate world too?

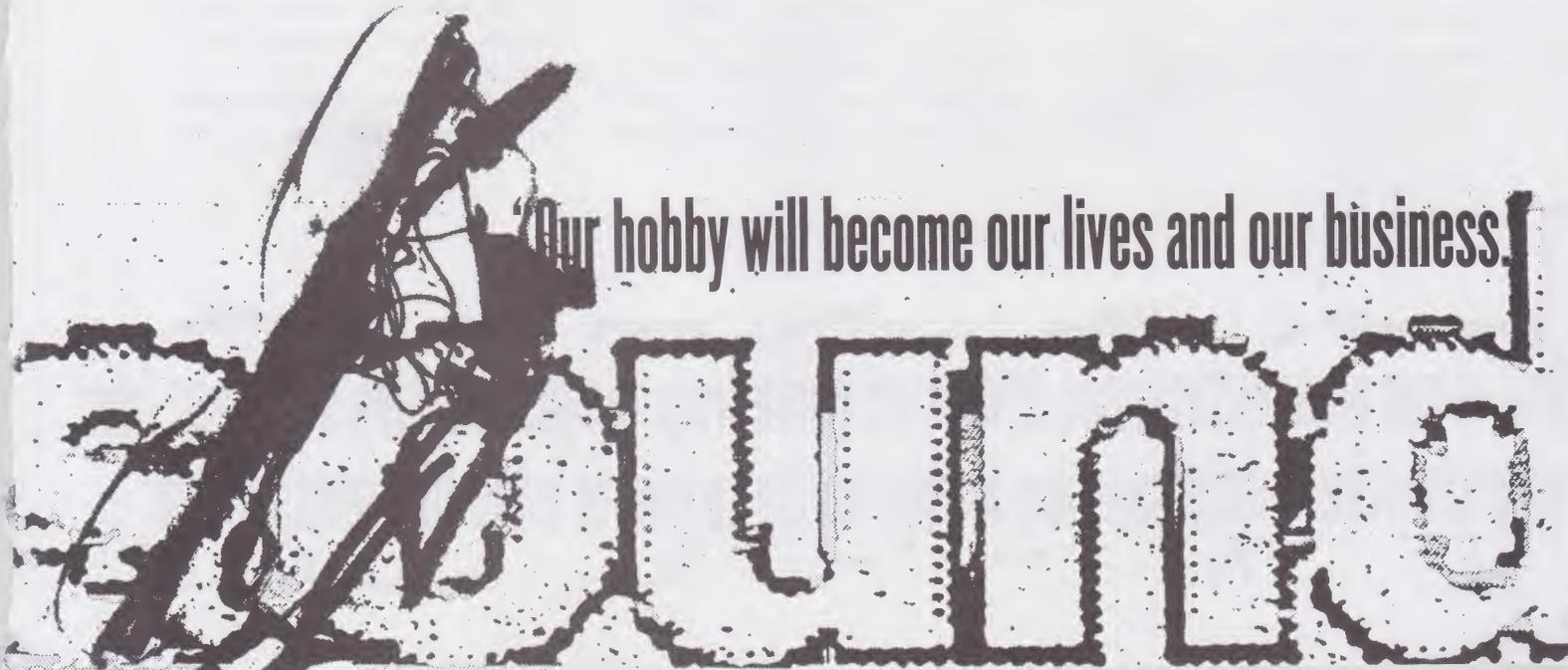
Matt: I learned a lot there, but I never wanted to stay there. There is this phenomenon at majors where the incompetent people get promoted because they aren't threatening.

Ari: We were young and thought that if we were ever going to take a risk, that we ought to do it now before we have families and obligations. If we fail at 29, we go on, but if we wait until we're 35 and have kids, we wouldn't be in a position to try something like this.

Matt: It wasn't that much of a step down financially. We went from making little, to less than little. It was like closing our eyes and jumping.

Ari: We put together a business plan to outline exactly what we wanted to do. Then we pitched it to family, friends of the family, their friends.

Matt: We networked with everyone we knew that had any money at all or had invested before. This was before all the other music companies wanted to go after this huge market share, get everyone and raise millions of dollars. We just wanted enough to get off the ground. We eventually got an amount that was sizeable in terms of indie rock, but about as much as it would take to start a small laundromat.



"Our hobby will become our lives and our business."

INSOUND

We also put every penny all three of us had into this. We knew that if we make zero dollars, worst case scenario, after so many months, then we would say "Okay, we tried something and it didn't work out." By mid-'98 we'd done a bit of research on what we had to do and we got a name.

I think it's great how you are just "Insound," not "Insound.com." "Dot com" has so many lame connotations.

Ari: I am glad you say that because we always thought of this as a music company rather than an Internet or tech company. We're not some Silicon Alley thing; we never wanted to be part of the Internet fad or hype. One day it's all going to be over and we don't want to be over too.

Matt: One of our main differences is that we come from the perspective of being fans, whereas other businesses are always trying to create a fan-like perspective, such as our competitors, UBL.com and CDNow. Even if in the future, all music magazines are exclusively online, we'll still get the kind of customers who still collect xeroxed fanzines and cassette compilations because we offer access to such things over to such things over the Internet.

I particularly dig how you guys do online chats with small, obscure bands. It makes it possible, for example, for folks in Barcelona and Pittsburgh to have access to artists whom they would not be able to interact with otherwise. But more importantly, such events make really small bands feel as well treated as a group that sells 30,000 records.

Matt: We always aimed to do that. Our defining motivation was to help create awareness about the labels and bands that we love. We knew that we're only as good as the bands

and zines we work with, so we wanted to provide something that was special enough that people would want to be a part of us.

Ari: As far as the zines are concerned, we wanted zines to be part of Insound in order to help bring together the community of people who care. The chats, the forums and the zines are opportunities for our community to express itself, so it's not just about albums.

People can be unified very easily through the sorts of tools you provide. I find interns and people to write for my zine by posting on the forum. I do this because a lot of likeminded people I know read Insound. It's totally unusual to have this kind of multi-faceted resource. I don't get this grotesque "I am trying to be sold something" feeling.

Matt: We're getting about a million visitors a month, many of them unique. The way we got to this point is that people know we aren't just suits and robots. If you call customer service, you are talking to someone who's coming from a similar point of view, or has similar tastes. We also knew that by having labels and zines involved with us, that they would carry our message a bit too, because we were helping them, and by helping us, they were helping themselves. That's also why we did the tour support singles series and the Zinestand. Those both have definite benefits for all involved. We have such limited resources, so we like to spread things in ways that are going to be best for everyone. ¶ We've come such a long way from when we first started. We didn't even know we could sell fanzines initially, and now we carry a lot of zines and we carry small, hard to find releases and labels. We would end up selling a ton of stuff for these tiny labels because people

couldn't find them in the stores. But if you did a search on the Internet, you'd find that we would have the Faraquet/Akarso split, or whatever. There were a lot of little labels and zines that took the leap of faith with us early on. We have so much loyalty and trust. I am really happy that Insound has been able to do right by them.

How has Insound grown?

Matt: For the first nine months it was just the three of us, all night, all day, all weekend. We were always here. We did customer service, we packed orders, and we went into chats as visitors because we didn't want the bands to feel bad that there were only 3 people there. We had this Geoff Farina chat where there were 20 people and half of them were us logged on using different names! Then when 50 people showed up for the Promise Ring chat we thought we were the biggest site in the world. [laughs] Our office was 200 square feet, and it was 3 of us and all the records and a conference table for three people to have a meeting at. There were rats everywhere. We had cheap desks from Staples that you couldn't lean on or else the legs would collapse.

Ari: At a certain point, we started to get burnt out because we were at work nearly 14 hours a day. So we hired our first employee, Mike Galinsky. We didn't even know what he was going to do, we just knew that we needed help. But he had a ton of ideas, like the tour support series, and he knew a ton of people. We thought he was someone who would help lead us into new avenues. Then we hired two more people.

Every time you wanted to hire someone, did you have to go to the investors and be like,

One of our main differences is that we come from the perspective of being fans, whereas other businesses are always trying to create a fan-like perspective

"This is Mike Galinsky. He is important because he made this movie with people from Rodan and Nation of Ulysses in it." [laughs]

Ari: They trusted us to make the right decisions.

Has there ever been a lot of pressure to show your investors what is up and that you're going to really deliver?

Matt: Yes. There have been times where we have to show that we had our priorities straight.

So you hire these people, you're growing and you move to a bigger office that is free of rat shit.

Matt: Ari's mom found this place for us walking down the street, during this time where there was no space available in NYC. We got this bigger office and we felt like our world was wide open. We felt like we had our training wheels off. Unfortunately, though, it was a total boys club.

Ari: It was seven boys, no girls. We had someone to handle zines, someone to do books, someone for customer service, someone to handle our buying from labels and our technology guy. Not to mention five interns who worked harder than anybody.

Matt: For people who really know the Insound site, know what we do, and know our record label, it's staggering to figure out how 11-12 people keep this thing standing up. We have all this information to keep under control and keep the quality up, and somehow we manage to hold it all together. Compare that to Pieceofshit.com which has 200 employees and hundreds of millions of dollars and their site is only half our size.

Ari: We like having a small business that grows organically. We're not looking to get huge instantly and go public; we don't want to do stuff like that. We don't want to answer to anyone else, we really like having a small, solid thing and having real and personal relationships with other companies like ours.

Let's talk a little bit about the trouble you ran into earlier this year. It was sort of like, if Insound was a band, this is the part where

you get dropped.

Ari: Not too long ago we were talking to some potential partners about expanding our business. Mostly in a support way, to help with our film stuff and retail and Tigerstyle. We only had nine people, and we needed to get more, we needed to grow.

Matt: Four or five months ago, everything was exploding. It was a crazy time. Everyone wanted a piece of anything that was online. We have had a lot of investors trying to make us grow into something we had no interest in being. We thought we had found people who wanted to help us grow in ways we were interested in doing, so we started working with them. Meanwhile, we wanted to continue making the best out of the 12 unbelievable people we already had, and so we invited people in for interviews. ¶ We went as far as hiring new people, and doing finances, signing term sheets and what not. Then Black Friday hit, and a lot of Internet economy stuff went south. Things that had been promised to us were suddenly pulled away. It was a worst case scenario. Subsequently, we sat down and had to evaluate what Insound was going to be, what our priorities were and what could we afford to do now. We had to sit down with these people we had hired three days earlier and tell them that we couldn't deliver on the promise we made them.

Ari: We learned so much from that experience. We learned the lesson of not committing to other than what you have. Having to let those people go was by far the worst day at Insound ever.

Matt: [long pause] It was just about one of the worst days of my life, easily. We let go four or five people who had all started that week. Some people had moved here from other states.

Ari: But they were so cool about it. They understood that we'd gotten in over our heads. We still deal with all of them in certain capacities. It's a relief that they even still talk to us.

Matt: What that experience taught us is that it's a myth that all you need is a pop-

ular web site and once it hits critical mass, it will all of a sudden make a lot of money. That doesn't necessarily work.

Ari: We're self-sufficient now. We just want to continue to be smart and reliable and reasonable. That's very much our ethos. It's a lot more natural.

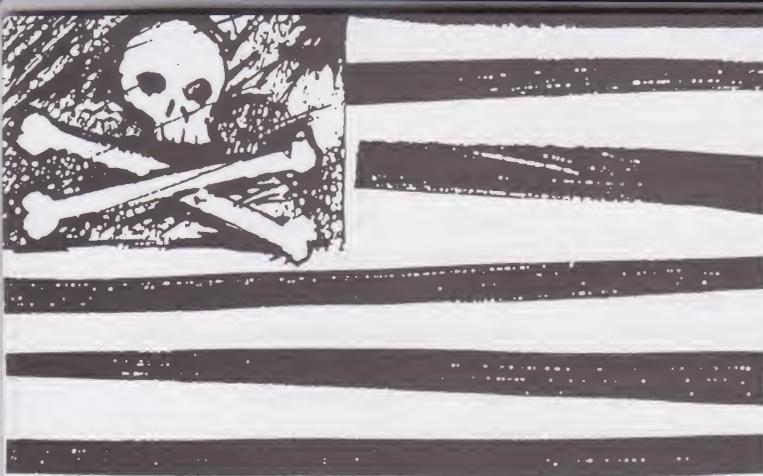
What are you most proud of?

Ari: I like seeing the new things that we have done. I like doing Tigerstyle, and working with people directly, helping our bands. We also want to do a magazine that extends out of a lot of Insound stuff, covering the zines and the films and the people that make them. And, of course, to continue to provide things for people that you can't find anywhere else.

Matt: In a scene that is rightfully suspicious of people who are trying to ask for things or trying to do certain types of things, we have had to walk a really fine line between running a business, where we make money off of products and services that other people provide, but also feel like we're adding value to it by working with those things. We are always reminding ourselves how we are only as good as our relationships that we're only as strong as the people we work with are, so we treat our relationships preciously. We work 12 hour days right now to show that.

Insound, it's not just a business—it's a lifestyle. [laughs]

Matt: It really is. I just feel so lucky that we have been able to navigate this all in a way where we have never compromised our relationships or ourselves. I am really excited to see a bunch of Internet companies fall off the face of the earth and how we can and will evolve in the face of that. And there's a lot of new technology that excites me, as an independent music enthusiast. Never before has information been so available and readily transmitted. And despite being relatively lo-fi, I am curious about how we will continue to embrace technology. Because inherently, I think indie music fans are not technologists. I'm just interested in seeing how we can use it. ©



JOHN ZERZAN

The whole idea of being represented by someone

At the WTO protests in 1999 and at this year's 16 protests in Washington DC, as well as the recent protests against the Democratic National Convention and the Republican National Convention, the anarchist "Black Bloc" has been a continual point of controversy. Championed by some as a roving band of militant activists, ready to reinforce a blockade or create a diversion, demonized by others as violent and counter-productive, there are few activists on the front lines that don't have some opinion of the black-clad anarchists.

As would be expected, the mainstream media has only focused on the negative criticisms of the anarchist contingent in the anti-globalization movement and has cast the entire movement as one that breaks windows, throws molotov cocktails and spits on cops. This, of course, is a distortion that only the corporate, status-quo biases of the mainstream media could create. It's also about as far from the truth as possible.

Anarchy, at least according to leading anarchist theorist John Zerzan, isn't about bomb throwing or window-breaking, it's about understanding domination and resisting the same. It's a message he has been preaching for 25 years now through books like *Elements of Refusal* and *Future Primitive*.

Zerzan's thoughts have influenced a generation of eco-warriors in the Pacific Northwest, and has helped spawn the huge anarchist presence in his hometown,

Eugene Oregon. It's a message that's controversial at times, but is crucial to understanding the thinking behind the anti-globalization movement.

Introduction by **Daniel Sinker**
Interview by **Aaron Kuller** and **Kevin Dowdell**

How did you become interested in radical politics in the first place?

I guess the main thing is just kind of a coincidence. I was a student in the '60s in the Bay Area at Stanford. I was very close to some of the major scenes. It was just a fortunate time and place to be, and I just started learning. I wasn't very radical when I first started at Stanford, it was kind of a boring and conservative place, but not far away very interesting things were happening. On the weekends I would go up to Berkeley. There was always wild stuff going on there in the '60s. I started learning about the Vietnam war, and that was the biggest thing that made a lot of us start to think about how the system really works.

When were you first introduced to Anarchism?

Unfortunately in the movement of the '60s, there were anarchists around, but they really did not play much of a part. It's sad that that's so, because that would have been the time to step up and really be an active part of it, but there really wasn't much anarchist activity. So by default it was the

Marxist organizations who were the militant ones. I gravitated for a while towards Maoism, because they were very militant—they'd get out in the street and put themselves on the line. Quickly, however, I got disillusioned with the whole hierarchical authoritarian Marxist-Leninist philosophy behind it. I think my own introduction to anarchy was more from personal experience. I just started to understand that it's got to start with the individual rather than bureaucratic mass politics.

How would you explain anarchism to someone who has never heard the term before?

It is fundamentally the effort to understand all the forms of domination that we see around us today, and then trying to end them. So it's about domination and trying to find an approach which is anti-authoritarian rather than one of the many authoritarian ways to deal with things.

So, despite common opinion, anarchism is not a philosophy about bomb-throwing, chaos and destruction?

Right, anarchy is motivated by an understanding of how deep the problem of domination is. Now we are seeing a real movement starting which is largely anarchist. It's starting all over the place, not just in this country. It's a huge challenge for us to figure out some creative ways to go, because the traditional left pretty much has died out—and has died out for

else is not authentic, and I

think it's degrading to be represented by another person.

some pretty good reasons. So by default, Anarchy is the name of the game today.

Has an anarchist society actually ever existed?

It existed before civilization, and to those of us who go by the label "Primitivist," that is a real inspiring source of reference. The picture of pre-civilization humanity is one of sharing, one of health, one without organized violence, one of a lot of leisure time, and one of gender equality. We have this marvelous view of things which sounds like it has been cooked up by anarchists or something, but what is interesting is that now it's the orthodox view in anthropology and archaeology. I believe that this has some really radical implications. For example, the old model was the view that life before civilization was nasty, brutish, and short. We should remember that civilization is really recent—it has been around for less than 10,000 years—whereas humanity has been around for up to two million years. The use of fire is now discovered to be about a million and a half years old. People were living in a conscious state far before the existence of civilization. I was just talking to this young guy in Portland, Oregon here who is taking archaeology at a community college, and he was telling me that it's just like what it says in *Future Primitive*, which is a little book of mine. That's what they teach in archaeology these days. Primitive society

is not the only example of anarchy, but it is certainly the longest one. They didn't have government, they didn't have hierarchy, and that's a really amazing thing to ponder.

When most people think of Primitive society, they think of Cannibals, the hard life, and cave men. Why do you think that is?

There's a lag in terms of the popular notion, that's for sure. We still have the stereotype of the caveman, pulling the women into the cave by their hair, that kind of thing. The very term "Neanderthal" is synonymous with being dumb, brutal and so on. When we sort it out though, the new picture—which as I said now is the accepted view is very different. Take for example, cannibalism or headhunting. That only came after agriculture. The tribes that would practice some of these things—things that probably no one would pronounce to be wonderful stuff—they all had agriculture. They're not an advance civilization necessarily, but it seems like the turning point is agriculture. ¶ Or we could look at it the other way around in terms of how great civilization is, and quote one of my very favorite lines which is from Freud. He said, back around 1930, "When civilization is universal there will be universal neurosis." Everybody will be neurotic because one thing civilization is, is the suppression of

instinctual freedom. That's the main thing. It's the whole theory of sublimation. You can't have culture and work unless you curb people's natural freedom.

How does that happen?

It takes the place of freedom. It takes the place of free sexuality, for one thing. It's the trade off. So people say, "Well we wouldn't have this wonderful art and so on, we wouldn't have these monuments, and everything." Well, maybe that isn't such a great deal. People will say, "We have got to have civilization, otherwise how are we going to get people to work?" But the whole point is, why should they work? Is this whole life just factories, and work, and 50 million people taking Prozac? Freud was right, it seems like. People are more and more neurotic, they are more and more unhappy. Now they are giving two-year-olds Ritalin because they can't seem to stand school, so they have to dope them up. People are starting to think about not only the nature of technology, but the nature of civilization.

So you think that technology is at some level dehumanizing?

Exactly. The belief is that technology is neutral, but I think it makes a lot more sense to view technology as embodying the very deepest values of the social system. For example, technology places distance over closeness or efficiency over playful-

ness. It's not value free. People have started to think about that. The Unabomber is kind of an extreme example, of that thinking—of course, we are not talking about his methods, but that's one public manifestation of people thinking about what civilization and technology really means.

He was someone who felt so suppressed, that he felt he needed to express himself in violence.

Right. He felt that he had to make these attacks to force the media to publish his ideas for a change, and that's why he did it.

You've become friends of a sort with the Unabomber, haven't you?

Before he was captured—actually even before the manifesto was published—I began to see that we had very similar ideas. So when he was busted, I started writing to him and we started a correspondence. I visited him at the Sacramento county jail before he was sentenced. I visited him three or four times. We got to know each other and we discussed these ideas.

On the subject of violence, what is your take on the use of property destruction in protest type situations?

I think we see the advocacy of property damage as a tactic because the other protest type activities really haven't gotten us very far, and things get worse and worse. One hundred species per day go extinct, ocean life is dying, and so on and so on. Not to mention that the social sphere is as bad as the environmental sphere. If the old methods were working, people would not have resorted to property damage against multinational businesses. But they haven't been working. I've been involved in it since the sixties, and it really hasn't worked. Protests aren't what ended the Vietnam war, by the way.

Then what did?

I think it was two things. First of all, it was the fact that the people in Vietnam kept on fighting year after year. Second, US troops started to refuse to take the field. They wouldn't go out to fight. The war was

actually being lost on both fronts there. I wish I could say that our protests had a lot to do with it, but I don't think they did.

In your book *The Elements of Refusal*, you talk about your different perspective on World War I and the reasons for it.

That was a thesis that I thought I'd explore. I looked at World War I in the context of all of the radical activity that was happening before the war. The war was a means of social control, as a means of pulling the rug out from under these dangerous movements and radical currents that were threatening the stability of capitalism and various regimes. Any country you can think of had a social crisis. For example, in Great Britain, the leaders were openly saying that civil war was just around the corner. When the war started, that was the end of it, everybody was off to war. War is often a way of changing the subject.

Do you think that the Kosovo war or the Iraq bombings had that purpose?

No, I don't think so. Although it's interesting in the Gulf War in '91 how the authorities here in the US came right out and publicly admitted that they could only afford about a 48 hour ground war. They knew there would be public opposition developing so fast, that they had to get in and get out in a hurry. The people wouldn't put up with any kind of war past a couple of days. Just below the surface, there would be major problems with the population. They wouldn't go for it. That's kind of revealing.

I think every day people are starting to realize that US foreign policy has never been, and will never be, based on some kind of humanitarian goal.

The government tries to sell it as humanitarian of course, but I'm happy to see people realize that it's just crass national interest politics. It always has been. They do their best to cover it up with humanitarian praises, and so on, but I feel like more people know that isn't so.

You often write that government is an inherently repressive force. Could you explain?

That's a basic anarchist position. Even representative government is degrading. The whole idea of being represented by someone else is not authentic, and I think it's degrading to be represented by another person. If you could get away from representation, it would lead to a real decentralized, face-to-face way of living.

I gather you don't believe the United States is a democratic state?

No, and that's probably one reason for the ever declining voter participation rate, or for the huge amount of distrust of virtually all the institutions. You don't find very much real support for any of it.

Even most of the Democrats I talk to now openly realize that their own party's leadership is corrupt. It's certainly far from uncommon to hear them talk about all the horrible things Al Gore has done in terms of human rights, the environment yet they vote for him anyways. Their reasoning is "He's better than Bush." Has politics always been like this?

It's always the choice of the lesser of two evils. It's a real cynical game. You can go back all the way to the town hall meetings in England, and people will say, "Oh, it used to be so wonderful," but in a class divided society, people have to defer to the ruling class, even in an open town hall meeting. The rich were still running it. People could go to the meeting, but they still didn't have any real power.

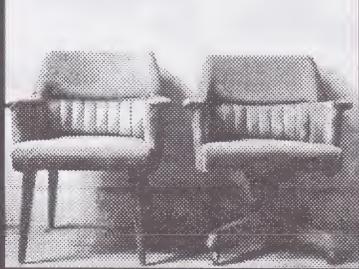
What do you think can be done? Is capitalism collapsible?

I really think so. I'm an incurable optimist—I believe I got it from the '60s. I saw things open up at least briefly, things like in France in May of 1968 when ten million people occupied their places of work. I really do believe that the system's days are numbered. It really doesn't have any answers left. When people think about their kids, about what is going to be offered to their children, they can start to see that this is just a mess. It's a totally unhealthy deal which offers no future. I see people more and more questioning what's going on in radical ways. ©

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QUESTIONS WITH THE BAND THE IVORY COAST

the ivory coast the rush of oncoming traffic



1. When did your band form?

Jay, Drew, Nick and Mahmood first played together as The Ivory Coast on August 30, 1998. Scott was recruited in the fall of 1999.

2. When will it break up?

We have already titled the first dozen albums. Once

we run out of titles, we will be able to break up.

3. What have you released so far?

A full length album, *The Rush of Oncoming Traffic* on BWR, a single on Sassy Boy records and appearances on compilations released by Sealed Fate and Swing Deluxe Records.

4. Why do you play the music that you play?

We can't play the music we don't play.

5. What is the weirdest thing that has ever happened at a show?

Songs performed flawlessly.

6. What is the best show you've ever played?

A tie: March 25, 2000 with The Dismemberment Plan and Elizabeth Elmore at The Middle East in Cambridge, MA; and March 19, 2000 with The Promise Ring and Pele at Maxwells in Hoboken, NJ.

7. State your purpose.

To write songs we enjoy and to play them for people we don't know in places where we don't live.

8. What were the runner up names for the band?

The Wicked Farleys, The Vehicle Birth and The Shyness Clinic but they were all taken.

9. How do you describe yourself to relatives who have no idea what you play?

Recently Jay's grandmother was hospitalized. During her stay she informed the staff that her grandson played in a band called The Grateful Dead. We have no idea where she got this information... Possibly medication played a part.

10. How do you describe yourself to kids in the scene who haven't heard you?

At a recent show in NYC a young gentleman was overheard in the men's room describing The Ivory Coast as sounding like Everclear or Sugar Ray. We have no idea where he got this information... Possibly medication played a part.

11. What does the band fight about the most?

Who has to "talk" to Drew.

12. What is the antithesis of your band?

99.9% of commercial radio.

13. Outside of music and bands, what influences you?

Power of suggestion, techniques of high speed hypnosis and circadian rhythm.

14. What is selling out?

Performing at the Republican National Convention.

15. If you could make a living off your band, would you?

Duh!

16. Where do you practice?

Nick and Mahmood's apartment in Lower Allston.

17. If you could play on a four-band bill, with any bands that have ever existed, who would you play with and what order would they play?

The Clash, Mission of Burma and Can. We would give up our slot for Fugazi. Mad Professor would do sound, Sean Agnew would run the show and it would take place at 84 Kingston St.

18. What goals do you have as a band?

To fulfill our aforementioned purpose.

19. What makes for a good show?

See #5.

20. If you were to cover a song (that you don't already) what would it be?

A song called "Be My Baby" by the Ronettes.

MAINTAIN OUTLYSSE

THE CHAMPS

THE
CHAMPS

N



Not long after the Talking Heads had their first really big hit record, *Speaking in Tongues*, *Time* magazine ran a cover story about the band's leader, David Byrne. "Rock's Renaissance Man," read the headline underneath a computer-enhanced collage of Byrne's stern-looking, expressionless face. I remember seeing that cover of *Time* as I waited in line at the supermarket to purchase my groceries, thinking that it was nice that mainstream magazines were doing features like that, but what on earth was so extraordinary about Byrne?

It's not that I didn't like the Talking Heads. I thought *Remain in Light* was a groundbreaking production. It's just that Byrne was being treated like the *first* intelligent musician who excelled at everything he did, and that I couldn't agree with that.

Time was obviously onto something though—you had to give them credit for that. They were trying to identify a new category of artistic laborer that had emerged out of the first generation of American punk musicians. However, by the mid-1980s, when he was getting this mainstream recognition, Byrne had already been passed up by dozens of second, third and fourth generation punks that were less-well financed and connected in Manhattan art circles, but overwhelmingly resourceful and talented all the same. These were the people,

ignored by the mainstream press, that set the stage for people like Tim Green.

Enter the world of Tim Green, former guitarist for legendary DC shit disturbers Nation of Ulysses, an increasingly in-demand producer of seminal underground recordings over the past decade by the likes of everyone from Bikini Kill and Bratmobile to The Melvins and Circus Lupus, to namecheck just a few. Owner and operator of his own Louder Studios in San Francisco, Tim also finds the time to play in his own highly regarded instrumental trio The Fucking Champs, who have just released their fourth record on Chicago's Drag City label. Not to mention Tim's own solo electronic act, Concentrick, which also have released its first full-length CD on Berkeley's Deluxe Records this fall as well.

What on earth then, does any of this have to do with David Byrne? Nothing really, except for the fact that where figures like Byrne have been offered to us as examples of the Protestant hyper-work ethic in the alternative arts, they've not necessarily had the same kinds of things to show for it. At least in comparison to eclectic artists cum self-sufficient, tasteful, multitasking worker bees like Tim, who've remained firmly ensconced in the underground for well over a decade.

The main difference is the distinction between fact and ideology; artists and produc-

ers like Tim set badly needed examples of creative people who are both self-sufficient yet still capable of making great art at the same time and who, despite their massive achievements, remain deeply modest.

I got a chance to talk to Tim about his career and his music one sunny Sunday afternoon late last summer. The following fascinating conversation is the result.

Interview by **Joel Schalit**

On The Champs' web site, I came across your statement of purpose. It says something like "the raison d'être of The Champs is rejecting and exalting the tenets of the classic rock idiom." I'd wager that not only sums up your band's gestalt, it also seems like a deliberate attempt to avoid having people seeing The Champs' unique take on rock and roll as being ironic.

We can't stand irony. In the past five years, there's been far too much of that, particularly the whole '70s revival thing. I'm really tired of it. People embrace irony because they're afraid to say that they like something. It strikes me as being more of a shield than anything else.

I know a lot of other artists who take a similar approach, and feel exactly the same way you do, like The Tight Bros. They're deadly



**WE LOST MONEY ON EVERY SINGLE TOUR
UNTIL THE VERY LAST ONE BUT WE REALLY
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serious about what they're doing.

It's like a caricature. People just think, "Oh yeah party music!"

Why appropriate the style of metal that The Champs employ then? If you're not deconstructing it, what are you guys doing?

Well, we don't consider ourselves a metal band by any means. We certainly like some heavy metal and consequently the influence shows, just as how any influence may show in one's music. I think the fact that we play loudly, through Marshall full stacks, the guitars are usually harmonizing and there's some double kick drum, shows that influence. People who are not so familiar with heavy metal just assume that that's what we're doing. Although we like Iron Maiden and Judas Priest, I think our guitar harmony influence comes more from Thin Lizzy and classical music.

Sure, but there are elements of heavy metal in your songs. I think it's how you deploy them that makes the crucial difference.

We went through a period where we were writing a lot of dark music, working in minor harmonies. That's just how we were feeling at the time. After a while we realized that we were writing all this dark stuff and we found it kind of gloomy. It sounded too metal, too evil, whereas our interest lay more in a dippy, goofy kind of sound, with atonal melodies, like King Crimson and Return To Forever. But

yeah, there are a few songs that we've done that are pretty metal, however they're more in the vein of the "New Wave of British Heavy Metal."

I'll be damned if I didn't hear a little *Seventh Son*-era Iron Maiden in some of your work. However, I think the influence that Thin Lizzy exerts on you guys is far more significant. And in my opinion those guys weren't metal at all. Those guys were definitely a '70s guitar band, but the two are not synonyms of one another.

Yeah, exactly. There's so much major harmony going in Thin Lizzy's music. It's just so beautiful and uplifting.

What were you doing before The Champs?

After Ulysses broke up, I moved to Olympia and played in some bands like The Young Ginns, The Fakes, Red Eye and Lice. I also played bass with The Wipers on a European Tour in '93. I started doing a lot more recording after that.

Were you in other bands before Nation of Ulysses?

Yeah, I've been playing in bands since I was nine. I was in an AC/DC cover band in fifth grade and then a band that played some Ramones and Clash songs in sixth and seventh grades. I was also in a band in high school that played the school dance circuit. The Vile Cherubs was a kinda 60's punk/garage band later in high school that

played clubs and put out a record. I came to know a lot of Dischord bands and people because they would come to our gigs and we started doing more hardcore shows. That's how I met the other NOU guys.

I remember seeing NOU warm up for Fugazi in Portland.

That was at the Melody Ballroom. That was a crazy show. This guy was just spitting all over us, especially Ian. Brendan Canty went after him, it was crazy.

I always really appreciated Nation of Ulysses because you guys didn't fit the stereotypical DC band mold. You weren't straightedge. You didn't play pop-punk or proto-emo. Nation was simply a great rock band with a hilarious sense of humor, and very strong jazz leanings. And you were the biggest Dischord band aside from Fugazi.

Yeah, we were never straightedge per se. We didn't take ourselves all that seriously. The best thing about that band was that it was everything to us. There was never any question that we would drop everything to go on tour whenever we could, even though for some of us it meant doing things like medical experiments for money. We lost money on every single tour until the very last one but we really didn't care, we were just dedicated and we wanted nothing more than to play as much as we could.

It held up, that's for sure. To this day, Nation of Ulysses remains highly mythologized.

Definitely. There was a lot of crazy shit that happened to us and a lot has been embellished and warped over time. We still have one more record coming out.

Is it a reunion album?

No, it's mostly the last recordings we did on a four-track at our house. It sounds pretty messed up. I was trying to make it sound much trashier than our studio albums, like *Pussy Galore* or *Dead Moon*, but I think I went too far. A lot of it is a microphone at the top of three flights of stairs while we played in the living room. The cops came while Ian was doing his vocals because the neighbors thought someone was being murdered. There's also a jazzy version of an old song at the end of the record that was recorded during a four-track session in '91 where we did jazz versions of all our songs while Steve was in the hospital making some money.

I've heard a bit of Nation's jazz influenced stuff, like the track on the first *Kill Rock Stars* compilation. I've always enjoyed that song.

Ulysses had a strict policy that whenever we did compilation tracks, they'd always be jazz songs. We actually did a performance at the Corcoran Gallery, where we used only vibes, sax, trumpet, upright bass, drums and guitar. We played the opening riffs to jazz standards and then kinda went off into free improv and also did some of our own songs. That day the janitor came up to us and said that he'd give us six months, and then we should break up.

What made you move to Olympia after Nation stopped playing together?

I was originally planning on moving to San Francisco, but I only had a few hundred dollars left when I stopped in Olympia on my way from DC. I ended up moving into a garage piled high with 4 feet

worth of trash.

Is that when you started to do your engineering work?

Not immediately. The economy was really depressed; I applied for jobs at convenience stores and did odd jobs like working on Slim Moon's car, doing some four-track recording and sometimes going to studios in Portland and Seattle with bands. I ended up going on a tour of Europe with The Wipers, playing bass and came back with some money for the studio.

What brought you to San Francisco from Olympia?

I'd always wanted to live here. My dad had gone to school here, at City College. He used to take me out to San Francisco a lot when I was a kid. I like being near the ocean too.

In retrospect, you came here at a time when the music scene was not exactly at its peak, at least compared to what was going on in Olympia. Obviously you had different things than just music in mind.

When I reached the point that I decided that I did really want to leave Olympia, my girlfriend, Sadie, said she really wanted to move too. So we went to San Francisco. I didn't come here for any reasons related to music, other than that I had a friend here named Matt Dubin. We'd made plans to start a studio, even though we didn't have much equipment or know each other too well.

So you weren't really start doing a lot of production work until you started living in Olympia?

Right. I did stuff in DC in my basement like *Bikini Kill*, *Bratmobile* and *Circus Lupus*, but it was all pretty low key and lo-fi. In Olympia, I started to get equipment and I went with my friends' bands to stu-

dios in Seattle and Portland to help out. The big reason that I got further into recording was because of Mike Lastra. He's a great producer and engineer who runs Smegma studios in Portland. He's such a nice guy, and he's so easy to talk to and ask questions about how things work—why do you do this, why you do that. He was so nice about teaching me things, answering all of my questions. I learned a lot from him.

What projects are you working on now?

I just finished up some records with *Slaves*, *Bratmobile* and *Last Of The Juanitas*. Now I'm taking a month off to do a bunch of stuff I've been putting off for a while and get ready to go on tour.

Now you can be an artist for a while.

Yeah. I've been working really hard for the past two and a half years. This new studio has taken up most of my time and my personal life has suffered from working that solidly. I just need to figure out how to schedule myself better so I don't get burned out. I don't like to go into projects not feeling as fresh as I could be. At the same time, though, I need to make a certain amount of money to keep everything going, so it's hard to find the right balance.

That makes total sense. I think that for people who know you, you're kind of an icon in the sense that you represent the classic artist/worker hybrid with all of your responsibilities, your own records, and your production work. It's a really impressive feat that you not only get it done, but also that you do it all so tastefully.

Thanks. On that note, being in bands, and having friends in bands who have given me a chance to work with them really helped me get started. I'm very grateful. ©



Matmos is the brainchild of two highly unconventional and extremely funny musical geniuses, Drew Daniel and MC Schmidt. Active together for a number of years now, the duo have cut their off-the-wall sampling aesthetic onto three full-length records, not to mention the huge number of singles, remixes, and compilations which they've contributed to, including a recent split 12" with Motion and the third release of their collaborative compact disc shredding project Disc.

Hard at work on their next album for Matador (and their first to be issued by the label's American wing, due out early next year), having just released a brilliant cut and *de-mix* collaboration with Louisville legends The Rachel's on Quarterstick, *Full On Night*, we got a chance to eat dinner with Matmos to talk about their forthcoming record, and how these champions of field recording have gone about gathering the source material for their samples. The results, in short, are simply hilarious.

Interview by Joel Schalit and Vance Galloway

What is do you take in constructing your music?

MC Schmidt: It all starts with the microphone.

Drew: It all starts with objects in the room, or places that we happen to pass through that sound interesting to us, that make us want to go back and grab things from there. Or an idea about an object as a kind of toehold, as a place to start. So much of the rhetoric around electronic music, the futuristic pretensions of it, involve the mastery of sound: any sound is possible, the world is at your feet. It's a view from nowhere that you can fall into if you don't find footing in the real world. I'm not going to pretend that the real world doesn't have a material coating, I'm just speaking of material objects.

For example, the piece you recorded using balloon noise.

MC Schmidt: And whoopie cushions too.

Are you saying that your approach to that is something like, "I really like the way balloons sound. Let's make something out of balloons." Or did you happen to be there, really dig the sound, and just go "squeak, squeak," and start your tape recorders running?

Drew: Both really. The balloon song came from when we were sitting in bed squeaking with balloons, because we'd thrown a birthday party at our house, and balloons were everywhere. Instead of going to sleep, we just kept squeaking them, and thought, "This would be a good song." Once we decide to use an object, we record it for maybe 40 minutes, trying to get every single kind of sound we can out of it. It turns into a whole terrain of sound, from which we pick the most musically sharp and defined parts. ¶ As an idea, it's conceptually appealing, but sonically it doesn't always pan out. It's always a shame when you make a recording of something that could be amazing but turns out quite banal. That can come down to the microphone or the space, or some kind of limitation. It's been really hard for us to make a song out of a human skull, because you just can't make a sound out of it. You can make clicks or clunky sounds, but that's about it.

MC Schmidt: We don't have a whole skull...

Drew: ...just the top half.

MC Schmidt: The damn thing will not bow. It's really easy to get a sound out of just about anything, but not a skull plate. It's made up of a bunch of different parts. There are these different plates inside of it.

Drew: There are little hairline cracks going into the fontanelle that end up kind of buzzing.

MC Schmidt: The song ends up sounding like a little drum played with chopsticks.

Drew: We got kind of a skiffly thing going with it. But that, in a way, is what I mean by getting a toehold in the world, because you're coming up against the limitations of the object, so it's kind of pushing you in one direction rather than another.

So the idea of choosing a single object or a single theme helps you make compositional limitations for yourselves.

Drew: Yeah, because otherwise you can drift into this everywhere and nowhere blender collage of elements without any kind of narrative or purpose.

MC Schmidt: Truth be told, on *Quasi Objects*, we did a bunch of these songs with this sort of object-base as our theme. That's part of how it came about. The medical record is the first record we're making where we make a piece where you have to have the idea first, and then you execute the piece. It's so hard. You have to play by the rules that you set for yourself. It'd be so much easier to make whatever, and then see what lays together that's common and later say, "look at this theme album,"

What's supposed to be medical about your upcoming record?

MC Schmidt: It's all made out of the sounds that medical technology makes.

You mean the machine that goes "Ping."

MC Schmidt: We keep wanting that but we've never...

Drew: The problem with recording surgery is that you can't isolate sounds.

So you guys have gone in and recorded operations?

Drew: Yeah, I've recorded a chin implant, a forehead lift, three nose jobs, liposuction, two laser eye surgeries.

Off of medical TV?

Drew: No, no. I put on a scrub suit and go into surgery and do the recording on location.

Who in the world lets you do this?

Drew: Sometimes my friends' doctors. We do a lot of negotiating. We're going down to a clinic in southern California where all these wealthy, vain people, actors and personal trainers go.

MC Schmidt: None of them are desperate accident victims.

Drew: I think that in a way that's allowed me to avoid the more predatory, ambulance chasing aspect of this work. I had a friend who thought she had cancer, but it turned out to be benign. I didn't really feel comfortable asking her to come along and doing a little lookie-loo sound recording of her tumor getting removed. It just seemed really predatory and creepy.

MC Schmidt: Unless she offered!

Drew: Yeah. [laughs] If she had offered, I would have said, "Oh, this is fine." I did ask my friend Mark if I could record him getting knee surgery, but his surgeon said no. I went to my friend Monica's eye operation. She had complications, but it turned out to be really good. They made me tape the microphone to the laser. However, the laser generated all this interference so it didn't really sound like anything. I was really happy when she had to have more surgery because then I could lay the mic on her chest, and it sounded much better. [laughs]

MC Schmidt: The doctor was used to it by then. He wasn't an ass about it.

Drew: It has been a real challenge to make something that's musically interesting, because sometimes you can find that the same clicks and pops will emerge, regardless of whether the source is something really dramatic, like in a nose job, where they take a hammer and break the bones in the face.

It doesn't sound very distinctive. I don't want to make something that on paper sounds really intense and threatening...

MC Schmidt: We'd never write really interesting liner notes for sounds that are actually quite dull. [laughs]

You mean using the liner notes as a crutch, so that even if something sounds bad, you can still say, "Composed entirely of sounds from..."

MC Schmidt: "...Crayfish neural tissue." Exactly. We're all about that. That's why we we're here. [laughs] If we hadn't used the term "crayfish neural tissue," no one

**If we hadn't used the term "crayfish neural tissue,"
no one would have ever paid any fucking attention to us.
I mean after all, we use it.**

would have ever paid any fucking attention to us. I mean after all, we use it. [laughs]

How do you distinguish the sound of crayfish tissue from, say, the sound of someone's nose getting broken?

MC Schmidt: Because it kind of went "BRMP," you know?

Drew: No, it was more of a "RRRM!" [laughs] In the same way that a band like Queen would say "Queen only use Slingerland drums, I don't see how its any different to say that we're using Nelcore Titanium Microscrews. It's just what the object is. Hopefully you don't need to read those kinds of notes in order to like our songs. Hopefully, they'll just add to the experience.

Add what?

Drew: Add an experience for the listener where you try and draw some analogy between what an object is, and what its been made to sound like. But I can be wrong. People can have expectations that don't fit the song that you've made, and vice versa. Look at a Japanese noise guy like Aube. He'll use a single sound source as the basis for an entire record. However, what he'd get out of that source and what we would be entirely different. For example, he's done a Bible record, and we did a song on *The West* that used the sounds of a Bible's pages getting turned. An Aube

song reflects his choices and his approach, and our songs reflect ours.

These sounds, while rich and interesting on their own, sound like you've cut them up into these tiny little pieces, poured them into a sequencer and done very traditional stuff with it. I hear patterns that sure don't sound like the patterns of everyday life. They sound like patterns that are coming out of a sequencer. But inside that, on a smaller scale, you can hear the patterns that are generated from the sounds themselves.

Drew: Yeah, hopefully there's a little of both. Given what the software can do, its

very easy to take any sound and turn it into a big old bass drum or write an attack on the decay and say "Hey, now it's a string patch." You wind up turning all of these objects in the world into more traditional instruments. Our goal is to try and have both a bit of the raw and the cooked in a given song; a little bit of what the sound is and its transformation, side by side.

MC Schmidt: That's definitely a lot of the fun—how much of which to do with it. I mean it's a lot of fun to work with instrumental presets to come up with different sounds, but its even more fun to use a latex T-shirt instead.

If you tossed away your sequencer, given the material you use for sounds, it'd be possible to make less rock-type music. Why don't you just go in that direction?

Drew: Because I'm an evil junk food addict when it comes to music. I like bass lines and I like hooks, even if they're made out of the sounds of bones being sanded down. It doesn't matter. It's still a hook because it's a pattern that helps you connect with people. That's why I like to form our music in that way, even though we use arcane sound sources to do so for beats and bass lines. It still connects to my pleasure centers. It reminds me of break-dancing at summer camp in 1984. ©

Black Dot Cafe

Marcel Diallo is one of the lead organizers of Oakland's Black Dot Artists Collective. Black Dot's fusion of revolutionary poetics, spiritual riches, streetcorner organizing, and in-your-face frankness are a driving force behind the insurgent hip-hop youth movement taking Bay Area streets against the many powers that be. The story of the Black Dot is a story of the ability of a group of people to unify, organize, and politicize a community, not only socially but artistically as well.

Interview by **Aaron Shuman**

How and why did you put the collective together?

I came home from college, and I was disillusioned by the lack of consciousness, even in a place like the Bay Area. When I got back here, all of it seemed really superficial, wasn't nobody really pushing it forward. While I was away, I had been recuperating from my Richmond ghetto experience, putting it into perspective by being away from it because I was able to look at it objectively and scientifically. I started to understand certain meditations, certain practices, certain disciplines that could really help people focus in and repair a lot of the damage that we've been through as a people. ¶ That's how the Black Dot Study Group started: as an attempt to have some kind of fellowship with a core of young, conscious black folks, in order to get them in the practice of collective chanting, collective tuning, collective meditation, collective studying and arguing and building, around issues of consciousness, around coming together to achieve goals individually and collectively. Basically, taking folks through initiations, because there is no formal initiation system for young black

folks in America. ¶ Families have been fragmented by slavery, and even more so by the racist laws of this land. We've always had to think on our feet and come up with new, innovative ways to take ourselves into manhood and womanhood, peoplehood and familyhood. The overall idea of the Dot stems from the extended family. In Haiti, they call them the "lakou." That's an extended family compound that all worships under the same Vodou priest or the same line of ancestors, the same rhythm. That's what I had in mind when I first started pulling brothers together to form Black Dot.

Where does the name Black Dot come from?

The name comes from one of the most ancient symbols of nobility, of the most high, of the *one*. In the later years of the Nile Valley, you would see the hieroglyph for Ra. It's always a black dot with a circle around it, framed in another circle. The black dot preceded Ra. Before the circle was put around the dot, there was just a dot. The dot is like a thumbprint in the sand. It goes back to the beginning of how our people described themselves. The Dot started around those issues: of origins, collective consciousness, building and coming together creatively to form something real that can also be functional—not only beautiful and artistically pleasing, but *functional* in the world. That's the why. ¶ The "how" is that I ran into a brother I went to high school with, Robert Jamal. He was bouncin' around a weak ass poetry scene in Berkeley and Oakland at the same time I was trying to get something started in Richmond. We got back together because I was into hip-hop and integrating everything—the poetry, the hip-hop, the spirituality—and me and him got to going back and forth about it all



being
the

same thing.

Where I got it

from, you could

bypass me and just go get it

from the source. You don't gotta be stuck

on my ego, and I don't gotta be stuck on

yours. Art gets touchy, 'cause what we're

dealing with is people, and there's a lot of

egos, and a lot of fragile ones at that.

That gets back to why the collective is important.

It's basically a laboratory for creative people to reach their full potential. You come into the Dot when you're ready to deal with yourself, when you're ready to drop the bullshit and confront your own doings.

The reasons people are even attracted to the Dot is the same reason why they would start practicing Santeria or join a Vodou house. It's for some kind of grounding where physical reality is spiritually based.

You describe what you do as the "living arts." Break down what it means to distinguish "living" from "dead" art.

Marcel Diallo



It may not be a dichotomy. I say "living arts" just to stress that what we do is breathing. We deal with everything that boils down to breath, that boils down to circulation, that boils down to change, spontaneity, being in the moment, just being there and not being stuck to a script, not being stuck to any static, fixed definition of what it is that we do. So when we say the living arts, I could be in the middle of some shit that I've written, and I could be reading it to you, and shit, I may simply forget. That's not gonna stop me; I'm not gonna sit there and say, "Oh fuck, I forgot my lines!" I'm gonna keep on pushing through that unknown space and create a whole different thing from that. That's what makes my theater ritual theater; that's what makes my hip-hop ritual rhyme.

The improvisation, the spontaneous energy that we put on it makes it living.

Does it have anything to do with the interaction between you and the audience?

Yeah, it's call and response. That ain't nothing new under the sun; that's shit you think everybody would be doin'. We've always been doing these things in the black church: preacher to congregation, MC to audience. We try to take it a little deeper than that, try to get the entire so-called audience involved into the breath of what we do. I may say everybody take a deep breath; take a deep breath together all at once. Once we all sharin' that breath, that breaks open a lot. That whole time, you coulda just been watching me thinking you were watchin' a TV and thinkin' you could change the channel. But the minute I ask you to breathe with me, we've become one. We both sharin' in the living art.

I wanted you to break down your spirituality, when and why you got into it. What it meant to you at the time, because it's a core component of what you're doing.

My oldest memories of doing what I do date back to 1980, when I was 8 years old. Every time I would come outside to play, me and all my other friends, all the young black males in the neighborhood, would come together in a circle and started rappin'. Ain't nothin' I'm doing that's different than most of the folks I came up with. It's just that I kept doing it. ¶ When I was rapping as a kid, every black male that I knew was rappin'. There'd be 30 of us in a circle. Some of us would be beatboxing, making sounds with our mouths, supporting; some of us would be supporting with the chorus; and some of us would be the virtuosos, basically some corny rap: "My name is Cel and I'm the sure shot / And I rock the party and I'm too hot / And I got a solid gold mattress / On top of the hill / I got all this money / And I'm dressed to kill." Crazy little corny things like that. At the time, it was about showin' how bad we was to the other boys. It was like an initiation ritual: one of those young black manhood rituals where we would come together. It was one of the first proving grounds. People call it the dozens; people call it signifyin'; you can go into all sorts of sociological books, and they'll tell you about this streetcorner mythmaking, although I grew up in the projects, so it wasn't a street corner. It was inside my public housing complex, which made it take on a different dynamic. We were inside of a village like we was in Africa or Louisiana. It didn't have to be that "urban" since it was inside the gates of a compound. So we were able to develop a little more over time and gain an

understanding of what it was we was doin'.

¶ When I went away to college, that three years of high school shit got erased. But this time, when I came back to it, since I was so far away from my 'hood, I was able to start thinking about *everything* that I had been through. At the same time, my mentor was teaching me about the mystery systems of the Ancient Nile Valley, the Dogon, the Egyptians, the Nubians, everything that was going on in Africa. African based spirituality: meditation, breathing, chanting, dream, interpretation, Jungian psychology. All this, you know, and how it all relates back to the one. All of that was going on in college. ¶ When I came back home, I came back to apply all of this learning to the place I had just left, but consciously now. So now, I'm seeking out those same black kids that I still am, and providing 'em with this path that was good for me. It's not necessarily the details of my path that I'm trying to translate, but more so, the overall discipline, the overall principles. Strip yourself down; find your origins; honor your sources; tell the truth.

I wanted to ask you about the Union of Black Cultural Workers.

The Union has the potential to be the premiere organization in the Bay Area for artists. We just need to get on the same frequency. The Union is more about self-importance, I would say, and less about a yearning to collect—more of a yearning to get yours. Which is the problem in the first place. That's why we really need something like it because the only way we're gonna so-called "get ours" is if we're a collective. Individuals are not strong enough to bring this beast to its knees and demand anything of it. And yes, all this that we are doing is still with the full consciousness that we are

living in the belly of the beast. We will by no means let bygones be bygones and just be happy artists. Everything we're doing is to eventually transform the world, but we know the first thing we gotta transform is ourselves.

Speaking of transforming the world, let's talk about some of the political work the Black Dot has done, like the Black Folks Against Prop 21 coalition. Why it was important for Black Dot to be politically engaged? How does that affect your conception of the art?

It was important for us to step up at that point, because we had already established that we were the keepers of a particular level of the shit. When Prop 21 came up, we were approached by some people. Boots from The Coup was already doing his arts workshop through the California Arts Council, about socially, politically conscious art. We had the idea to do a tape. "The Rumble," Boots called it. It consisted of 30 MCs that came and rapped. The prerequisite of the project was that each person had to write something about Prop 21, about juvenile justice and whatnot, and these were folks who were usually rappin' more about they money and their street perspective. A lot of them hadn't taken it to the level of legislative politics; it was more about the politics of street, the politics of the self. ¶ It was a big leap in another direction. I'm not gonna say it was a leap forward, because I don't think the whole political struggle is a forward thing to leap into. I think it's necessary because that's the only way certain people understand you, like, "I'm a new social and political activist; I protest Shell and I'm for the release of Mumia." All of these are beautiful things: Free Mumia! Fuck Prop 21! Fuck 187! Down with 209! All this shit is cool in terms of '60s-style nostalgia, but we're in a different world right now, and if we are to make any kind of so-called political change, we definitely need to rethink our methods and the ways we go about doing it. It's always good to have pressure from that front, no doubt, but that's not the Black Dot's preoccupation. We're more with bypassing all that shit and getting the land. ¶ The reason we have so many problems is that we're disenfranchised; we have no land base. We're a cul-

ture of tenants, nomads, serfs, sharecroppers: people that's living on other people's land. We're a culture of beggars, and a culture of bitches. We sit here complacent, in our little bourgeois fantasies, even though none of us really have no money. But the minute *massa* shows us or reminds us who he really is, everybody wanna bitch. Don't remind us who you is! We don't wanna know where we at! Just don't pass them kind of propositions because you gonna make us realize that we still oppressed, and we don't want to be reminded of that right now! We wanna stay in this complacent state that we're in, this numbness.

Sure, the Black Dot is supposed to represent a different kind of social space where people can't sit back and be complacent. But there's something different about how you're going about encouraging people to not stand idly by. You want to explain what that is?

I'm the kind of person that would like to use some of the methods that were used against us, to accumulate a land base. With that land base, I'm not preoccupied with trying to go smash and kill white people. I'm preoccupied with trying build a future for people that we can inundate with this knowledge that we have, this old way of life. We don't have a lot of silly nostalgia; we're trying to reiterate shit that our ancestors wanted to be. I wouldn't even remember that I'm African if some African that was stolen didn't want to remember. That could have totally been wiped out if people didn't remember, didn't have a desire to remember and retain who they are, to sustain their lineages and their ideals and their stories, their myths and their ways. The only way that can exist is in space and time on the physical plane. And what is space and time? Space is place, place is land and your land defines your time. If you don't have land, you're on somebody else's time. You're looking at your watch, your wrist shackle, sayin', "Oh, I gotta be here to massa IBMs, or I gotta be

over here to massa Merrill Lynch, or I gotta be over here to massa UCLA," or whatever. You still on somebody else's time. ¶ We tryin' to get land so that we can define our own time. It's still not the ultimate, but at least it reduces your relationship with the government to just paying taxes. I'm not paying your middlemen banks; your banks don't own my shit; my shit is free and clear. And that's where all this Black Dot shit—all this beautiful singin' and dancin' and chantin' and rappin' and poetin'—that's where every-thing's trying to end up. It's just the

We tryin' to get land so that we can define our own time. It's still not the ultimate, but at least it reduces your relationship with the government to just paying taxes.

vehicle, the practice, the ritual; it's getting' ready for what we really have to do. Then we gotta get on some tractors and till the land. We really gotta start growing community gardens and our own food so that when the time comes, when food just gets so expensive that the average person can't afford it, we can go into our backyard and eat. We can go into our supply shed and crack out our canned goods that we canned up ourselves or that we preserved. This is what it's about: cultural sustainability. ©

20 QUESTIONS WITH THE BAND SELBY TIGERS

1. When did your band form?

We came together in the spring of 1997, but we have been in this lineup for the last two years.

2. When will it break up?

When it is no longer fun and the magical elixir wears off.

3. What have you released so far?

We have self-released two CDEPs that are now out of print for the time being, and a two song 7" on our label Hopeless that came out in July. We also have a full length CD/LP called *Charm City* that was released on October 17th.

4. Why do you play the music that you play?

It is a combination of what comes from all of our hearts.

5. What is the weirdest thing that has ever happened at a show?

Sammy: Getting heckled by some goofy tall bald guy telling me to take off my jumpsuit at our last show in Chapel Hill and it turning out to be the guitar player in Superchunk.

Arzu: It usually involves unwanted nudity.

Dave: Being told that I was as cool as the drummer of Argent.

Nathan: Once I broke a guitar string and in a million to one chance, it landed in a electrical socket while it was still attached to the tuner on the guitar. To say the least, there was a bright flash and a lot of flames. The string was completely incinerated, we kept playing the song, and people freaked out like it was a Kiss stage move or something.

6. What is the best show you've ever played?

That is a hard one. I guess that some of the shows that we'll always remember have had to do with who we've played with and the places themselves. But it is a toss up. Some of the more memorable ones would have to be two shows at the Middle East in Cambridge, MA one with the Alkaline Trio and another one with Radio 4. Dillinger Four's record release show this year in Minneapolis with them, Lifter Puller and The Real Enemy. However we just got done touring with the mighty Radio 4, from NY and we are already feeling nostalgic for those shows.

7. State your purpose.

1. Rock.
2. Make the professor happy.

8. What were the runner up names for the band?

We went through the Selbys, Junior Varisty (which is in use already), and the Outcasts.

9. How do you describe yourself to relatives who have no idea what you play?

We would say loud rock music, maybe with the emphasis on the loud part.

10. How do you describe yourself to kids in the scene who haven't heard you?

If the rest of the Hopeless bands were like the Clash, we'd be more like Elvis Costello.

11. What does the band fight about the most?

Mark LaVenture, our friend who came on our last tour, says that poor navigations when driving to the shows and poor directions would lead to the most arguments.

12. What is the antithesis of your band?

That second rate, wanna-be Van Dyke Parks, heartless, singer/song-writer bullshit masquerading as "emo."

13. Outside of music and bands, what influences you?

Movies, Mini Golf, Architecture, Chevy Chase.

14. What is selling out?

Not having anything left.

15. If you could make a living off your band, would you?

Duh.

16. Where do you practice?

City Sound in NE Minneapolis.

17. If you could play on a four-band bill, with any bands that have ever existed, who would you play with and what order would they play?

Devo, Blondie, Buddy Holly and us.

18. What goals do you have as a band?

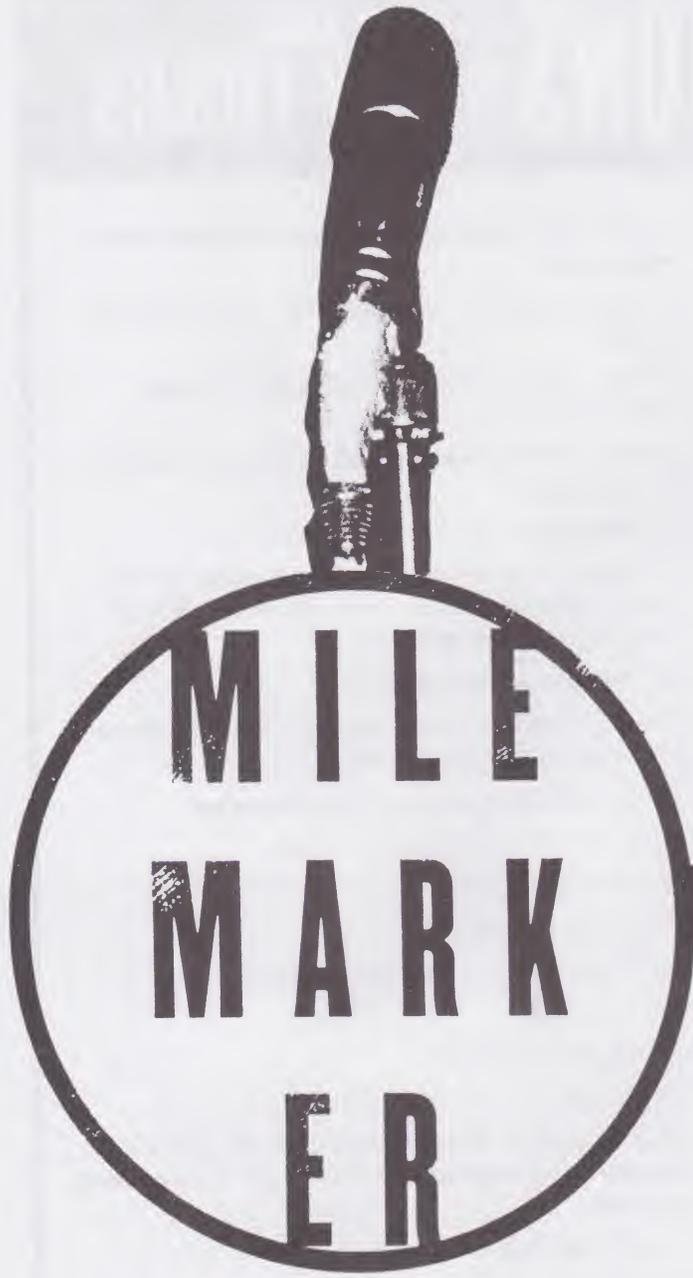
Pinball machines and action figures.

19. What makes for a good show?

People having fun. punk rock isn't math class.

20. If you were to cover a song (that you don't already) what would it be?

"He's a Whore" by Cheap Trick.



Fuck work that you don't like.

Milemarker sing in manifestos. Or do they? The entire system is out to get you, their records seem to say, and the only solution is to "Gradually weaken the machine piece by piece. Leave its shell in place. I've got the recipe for integrity: Act like you belong until the final stage."

But there's something distant and cold about their records, a feeling that everything may not be as it appears. The band says it best when they sing "The ice age is coming, better get a sweater or something."

Musically, the band is enigmatic as well, blending hardcore guitar crunch with new-wave keyboards and electronic loops. The resulting sound is one that invites you in, but doesn't want you to stay too long. It's fascinating and fear-inducing at the same time. Which is probably exactly what the band intends.

In this day and age of genre-bending, Milemarker manages to bend it just a little further. You never know quite what they mean when they say, "we keep waiting for the robots to crush us from the sky," but you can't wait to find out.

and play guitar." They've been eating Spaghetti-O's for the last month. It's not about not doing anything—that's not what "Fuck Work" means. There is nothing wrong with the idea of work as long as you work for yourself on your own terms. Maybe that's too limiting—more specifically, "Fuck work that you don't like." If you are working and doing something you are really into, then that's awesome. I want to be able to do what I'm doing and tour around and play shows without having to steal gas and shit like that. I'm not expecting to get paid a lot, but if I can do design stuff, which I'm pretty into and live off it, then that's great.

Yeah, the whole idea being that if people felt like what they were doing was valuable, then they wouldn't mind doing it as it fulfills your needs. You need to cover your necessities—water, food, shelter. As long as you have those needs met, then everything else is just what you choose to get done.

Al: It's not that hard to get those needs

it." Not in the sense of making a lot of money, but, more like when I'm 75 years old, I want to say that I did a lot of cool, creative shit and "made it" my whole life doing the things I wanted to do and have respect for myself. People just have a weird idea of what "making it" means. ¶ If we talk about politics in the music or have songs about stuff, I don't really think that means that much compared to actually doing something about it. The really important thing is what you're doing.

Dave: I was really happy that Kent McKlard put in an intro to *HeartattaCk* called "Threat by Example." It went into the whole "labeling" thing and said, "you aren't afraid of a bunch of Anarchists—you're afraid of what a bunch of Anarchists could do." Unless they do something, they aren't a threat. If they do something and don't call themselves anything, then you don't really know where to classify them. It's like Fugazi, who has done everything on their own terms and

Introduction by **Daniel Sinker**
Interview by **James Squeaky**

Some of your songs are about work and working conditions. I was wondering what your take on work is.

Al: I don't like work. I'm totally not into it. We're definitely trying to make the band the thing that we do full time. Whatever else we do to make ends meet is secondary. Our band is a pretty self-conscious way of constructing a way of living other than what is normal.

Dave: I don't mind the concept of work. The whole "Fuck Work" thing is misleading to a lot of people because many of them are like, "Yeah man, fuck work. Work sucks. I don't want to work for the man." Then you ask "So what do you do?" and they say, "I sit around and watch TV

met. Being on tour, what you need to survive is so basic: a little food, some water and enough gas to get to the next gig.

Dave: Just recently for the first time, I had someone come up to me and say, "So you guys are trying to make it." I don't really understand—we've been touring for a long time and now we're at the point where we'll play somewhere that we've played before and there are more people there than last time. It's not about "making it"—touring is just really what we like to do. The shows seem to be better now than they used to be. It's different than when I toured with Griver in 1995. We're doing the same thing now that I was doing then, but instead of getting paid \$6 a show, we're making like \$50. That's more than a 500% increase.

Al: Myself, I'm definitely trying to "make

have gotten so big—they are a huge threat to the music industry. Or even Prince, who put out his whole album as MP3s for free on the Internet—the record industry went crazy that he wanted to put his stuff out on his own label. It's a really dangerous thing to break the constant flow of how things go. A label like Dischord gets their CDs everywhere that Atlantic does, but they do it the way they want to do it and cut out all the bullshit hierarchy.

Al: Making the record that we just made, I felt really weird about it for a while because there is this whole idea of creating products and selling products and what that means. How can you talk about anything else when in the end you are just participating in that same capitalist end? Making a record that was sort of a self-conscious product is one way. I think

another good way is if we can be in this band and play exactly the music that we want to play, get it out to as many people as possible and survive for as long as we keep wanting to do it and for as long as it's interesting, without having to break up because we signed to a label that screwed us or wouldn't let us put out records, or breaking up because our van broke down in Nebraska and we didn't have the money and had to sell all of our equipment. The point is to do what you want to do and say, "This is my life and I'm not going to settle for whatever."

When you are trying to "make it," does that mean you have to be conscious of what you are doing and think about what's going to appeal to people so that you can continue to do it?

Roby: Well, I think honesty appeals to people in this scene.

Dave: When we finished making the *Future Isms* record, we said "We just made the most unlistenable record imaginable." I really didn't think people would like that

Dave: A few issues ago, *Adbusters* put out an article stating that they weren't "leftist" and they weren't "feminist" and they weren't "fill in the blank." A lot of people cracked down on them and said "What the fuck? How can you dismiss that you are any of these things when you have a magazine that is obviously those things!" Other people were like, "That was totally great that you came out and pissed off half the people and made them think about what you are actually doing and know the limitations of being a feminist or any other -ist. They were asking, "What does it mean to be a feminist in the context of a much bigger picture?" It's important that all of the -ists realize that they are a subsection of an oppressed sector and must pull together to find unity among them. The same goes for punk: If you label yourself, such as, "I am a Musician," you define yourself by the word rather than what you actually are.

How do you think you get beyond that? How do you avoid thinking in -isms?

Al: That's the new, much more efficient way of doing it. They can probably put anarchism and Marxism in there too and send you to the right list of obscure books that you might be interested in purchasing.

For a lot of people, it is fairly appealing because they say, "Well at least I'm being advertised to with stuff that I might be interested in."

Dave: It's scary because right now it seems alluring. I'd *much* rather hear the offer from companies that I'm interested. But that sort of tracking system is just to get people more comfortable with super targeted advertising. Tracking these purchases.

Like those Safeway cards, where you buy soup, then you get a soup coupon.

Dave: But that's scary, right? Because now they know everything you've bought from that card. They know everywhere you've been on the web already.

Al: The idea is that if it gets you the soup you want, and the books you want then it seems like even anarchists would like it.

If you label yourself, such as, "I am a Musician," you define yourself by the word rather than

record.

What is the idea of *Future Isms*?

Al: I guess that just ties into the whole idea that when you put a label on something, when you define and categorize something, you instantly set these limitations on it. It's also about the ideas musical genre or political affiliation that we subscribe to. In all honesty, I don't think of us as a punk rock band or a hardcore band, or a rock band or anything. We are just some kind of band. Self consciously, we try not to corner ourselves, because once you do that, people say, "Oh yeah, you're going for that whole 'insert-genre-here' style. Just do this, this and this and you've got it."

Are you afraid that if you put yourself into a role, you'd feel like you'd have to be obligated to fulfill it?

Dave: There is a need to have them to a certain extent: "What do you do?" "I race cars," or "I ride horses." We're not implying that we should destroy language, it's there for a reason. Being able to say what you do is there for a reason.

Al: I don't think there is a way to totally get around labeling. The problem is much more fundamental. Whatever you subscribe to or what your interest niche is, there is going to be some stuff for you to consume based on that, and that's really about it. Basically, the reasons all these boxes exist is to make sure you get the right junk mail, whether it's really leftist junk mail or information on how to consolidate your loans.

Like those Internet things that can track where you go on the web and give you advertising banners based on what websites you visit.

Dave: The way the system can use these things can be really terrifying though. It could be used to squeeze out the "undesirables"

Al: Well the thing then really becomes about who is undesirable these days. The only people that would be undesirable are the people who don't have a book that they want to buy.

Yeah, and those people probably wouldn't be on the Internet or in Safeway anyway.

Al: It seems a lot more *Brave New World* than *1984* to me. I don't think there is any sort of threatening sector in this society any more. As long as everyone's needs are accommodated. In this society it isn't viewed as particularly dangerous to believe in anything as long as it doesn't directly threaten business.

Dave: Well, this is taking the scenario into the future: What if in 2050, they have those things much more refined and they can zap into your house and figure out what sort of TV programs you watch all the time. Figure out what sort of car you drive because you bought it on a debit card. All this shit that they can basically pull up on a file. If something like a Black Panther style movement were to happen, where the government just tries to crush these people who weren't really revolutionary before they had to be, then boom! All of a sudden there's red flags that are going up—look at the sites this person is visiting on the Internet and what books they checked out from the library and what movies they are renting. When these people start to believe, "It's time to take up arms and fight and stand up for what we believe in," then the government pulls up the file and knows everything about this person, down to what they've eaten for the last 15 years. And it all fits on tiny computers. It

merchandise for sale." Unfortunately, money is the language that we all speak.

Dave: It's hard to get around it. I hate buying stuff, but Roby and I were at a record store today and we both bought a record! We don't have a lot of money right now, and we're trying to figure out how to justify spending the money. If that record is going to make you feel that much better, or those shoes are going to make you feel that much better. On a small scale, it's how you have to get by. You have to come up with a balance of how you are going to be a consumer. You are a consumer because you are living in a consumer world. It's important to achieve a balance of how you are going to buy things without being obsessive about it.

Dave: You have to live and you have to feel like your living isn't through what you are buying.

Something I've started doing is thinking in units of measurement of money in relation to what I earn at my shit job. I think about what I'm buying and how many hours I had to work to be able to buy this product and if it's worth that to me. Like if I spend 10 bucks on a CD, that's more than an hour of work and so I figure I should get at the very least ten times the amount of return on it.

Al: Everything you buy, that's money that you no longer have. Then you have to replace that money with some sort of job. The whole thing is this big money scam to trick you into going to work. If you think work sucks then you have to figure out ways to minimize your expenditures.

Dave: And it's pretty crazy to think about that in relation to the records we sell. We sold X amount of records, that means that we made that many people work that many hours. Every show we play cost 40 hours of people's lives.

what you actually are.



can really lead to dangerous things some time further off.

Al: Supposedly because everyone agrees about where we are going and are resigned to the fact that capitalism "won," there is nothing to challenge that. As long as everyone is being a good shopper, they don't have anything to worry about. In hardcore, there is a certain hypocrisy in the way that we express ourselves and what we supposedly agree on but then at the end saying, "We have records and other

I think about that a lot in relation to how many CDs I own and buy. It seems rather piggish how many I own, but then I justify with the fact that I don't own too many other things and I try to get a lot of value out of the things I do own. It doesn't justify my consumption of the resources, but at least I'm going to try to get a lot out of what I do consume. You have to allow yourself some things to keep your sanity.

Al: But, then if I go to the record store and buy a record, then that's an hour that I have to work sometime.

Dave: Plus that guy had to be working so that I could buy it from him and that's another person working. That's the consumer and the worker working.

Plus the band working to create the record and the \$800/month PR agent...

Al: The trick with music is you have to look in the dollar bin and try to get into that stuff.

Dave: I'm just not happy with that. With six records that I could get for a dollar each, I'd rather just get one good one that I can listen to over and over again.

Al: See man, but then you're going to be listening to it at your job...

Dave: But don't you think you'd get sort of weird if you were listening to Bon Jovi all day? ©

Started in the UK in 1970, Verso Books is one of the largest and most influential publishers of radical literature in the world. Originally founded as the publishing wing of Robin Blackburn's journal, *New Left Review*, Verso first made its name based on issuing titles by the most important European Marxist thinkers of the 20th century: Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Raymond Williams, Jean-Paul Sartre, Terry Eagleton, Stuart Hall and Louis Althusser.

As much as these thinkers might epitomize the radical edge of intellectual chic, their respective influences can be felt throughout the history of Cold War-era leftist politics.

and Touch & Go, the material that Verso puts out has the capacity to make people re-think the world around them.

Punk Planet spoke with one of Verso's chief editors, Colin Robinson, about creative attempts to make radical literature and ideas more popular.

Interview by Joel Schalit and Charlie Bertsch

It seems that Verso has had more "crossover" titles, at least in the States, than years previously. We're thinking of Che Guevara's *Motorcycle Diaries*, and the 150th anniversary edition of Marx and Engels' *Communist Manifesto*. Not to mention Doug Henwood's

ing *The Manifesto* in a glossy, nice red book-mark form. A lot of people had gotten to know Marx through the brittle yellow pages of political pamphlets. It was quite a contrast to see this nice book prominently displayed next to the coffee table volumes at the best independent bookstores. But at the same time, the book's elegant packaging helped win it some new publicity obviously, not to mention a lot of new readers. Can you tell us about the thought process that led you to do such a republication?

The idea for republishing it came from Robin Blackburn, who's one of the editors

VERSO BOOKS

Indeed, the great majority of them helped define the intellectual parameters of the 1960s New Left, echoes of which can still be heard today in the cries of anti-globalization protesters attacking international financial institutions and economic structures in Europe and North America. Verso Books was essentially the first publisher to gather within itself all of these diverse radical thinkers and their significant publications and expose them to an even wider audience than they had ever had before.

Simultaneously issuing both fresh translations of older works as well newer, more up-to-the-minute titles, Verso's impact upon leftist intellectual life over the past 30 years is unavoidable. Moving from Marxist theory all the way to the writings of human-rights activists, gun-toting Latin American revolutionaries and popular radical economists such as Nobel Prize winner Rigoberta Menchu, Ernesto Che Guevara, and *Wall Street* author Doug Henwood, over the last three decades, Verso has been a virtual university for revolutionaries of all conceivable progressive stripes.

But what makes Verso really stand out from the crowd is that, despite the high-mindedness of most of its titles, it has made a major impact with very little money—a lot a radical indie label. And, like the best offerings from labels such as Dischord, Kill Rock Stars

Wall Street. Does this seem like an accurate perception to you?

Yeah, I think so. Through the '70s and the '80s, Verso was a publisher of theory, mainly European theory. In the last 10 years, we've definitely branched out into publishing a lot more stuff that appeals to a more general audience, mainly within the field of culture I suppose.

What was the rationale for making that transition?

Well, I think that partly it was just a question of necessity. The sorts of theory that we were publishing, mainly European Marxism, just dried up. But so did the audience to some degree.

How much do you attribute that to changes in the political climate since the end of the Cold War in 1989?

Obviously through the '80s and the '90s, the political situation was not very sympathetic. That affected the market for the sort of books we were publishing, so we had to try and branch out a bit. I think we did that pretty successfully.

Let's talk a little bit about *The Communist Manifesto*. You took some heat from some of the more 'pure' people on the left for releas-

at Verso and used to be the editor of *New Left Review*. He found out that Eric Hobsbawm was writing an introduction to a Spanish edition of the *Manifesto*. So we decided to ask Hobsbawm if we could have his introduction. Then we thought "it's the 150th anniversary of its publication, why don't we try and present this as a kind of modern edition?" And then, I just thought that maybe it would be fun to just play with the idea of doing an upscale version of the *Manifesto*. ¶ The idea was reinforced by a piece in *The New Yorker* by John Cassidy, saying that Marx was going to be the "next big thing" in terms of economic theory. It struck me that if the upscale *New Yorker* audience was being told this that maybe we ought to, in a sort of to slightly tongue in cheek way, present an edition of the *Manifesto* precisely for those sort of people. ¶ It was partly ironic and partly not. I think there was an acknowledgement in the way that we published it that the proletariat is not the "horny-handed sons of toil" any longer. Most of the people who are workers these days are in offices, especially in the United States. And they have quite a developed aesthetic. In that sense it wasn't entirely ironic. There was some feeling that pre-

sending the book in a nice, attractive, designerly way would relate to where the modern proletariat actually was. But we did play around with it a lot once we got Komar and Melamud to do the cover. They gave us a big red flag for the cover, which was very nice of them. Then I thought "maybe we should put a little red ribbon in it, and put red end papers inside," and start to make it into a sort of sybaritic edition.

You had a lot of fun publicizing the *Manifesto*, didn't you?

I was talking with a journalist from *New*

York magazine, because they were doing a little feature on it, and I said that we were going to try and sell it through upscale clothing and furniture stores. The writer asked which ones, and of course I don't really know any upscale clothing or furniture stores—I'm a left-wing publisher! So I said Barney's. The writer then asked if she could ring Barney's and ask them what they thought of the idea. I told her, "Go ahead, that would be great." A half-hour later she called me back and said, "You really ought to get in touch with Barney's. They're very keen on this." I was kind of shocked by that.



So you actually got an appointment to talk to Barneys about selling Marx books?

Yeah. I went up to see the creative director, this guy called Simon Doonan. We had a meeting, and he asked what I wanted to do. I told him that it would be great if we could have the mannequins on Fifth Avenue marching across the window with big red flags wearing little Prada dresses. In their purses would be copies of *The Communist Manifesto*. He said he thought it was a great idea. Doonan said, "I can see lipstick displays in the corners, with lots of

matter because we'd had so much publicity that we were up and running. Then it was really just a question of trying to think of other things along similar lines that we could do.

How on earth could you top that?

The next place we tried was the Royalton Hotel on 44th street in New York, which is a very groovy, Phillippe Stark kind of hotel. All of the bellhops in there dress like Maoist guards. They're all so fabulous looking, when they come to the door, you feel like *they* should be staying in the place's fabulous rooms, and you should be the one bringing them a drink. ¶ We asked them if they'd like to put our sybaritic edition of *The Communist Manifesto* in the bedside table where you'd normally find a Gideon's Bible. Again, to my astonishment they said yeah, they thought it was a pretty cool idea. They could see that it might work quite nicely for them. So again, we got into discussing it in detail with them, and released the information to the media. And again, we got a lot of coverage about the Royalton putting the *Manifesto* into its bedside tables. However, once they realized how much attention it was going to attract,

they chickened out and didn't do it. But again, it didn't matter because by then we'd gotten a lot of press out of it. ¶ Then we thought that we really ought to try and do something on Wall Street with it. One of the things about the *Manifesto* is that there are a lot of passages in it where Marx and Engels praise the dynamism of capitalism.

Absolutely. It gets rid of that halo.

Right. It's this modern system sweeping away the old kind of Feudalism. They're into the energy of the new order. So we got the bookstore that's closest to Wall Street to give us a couple of big windows.

We blew up all of the little passages from the *Manifesto* where Marx and Engels are praising capitalism, and put them in the store's windows in the hope that we could lure Wall Street guys in to pick copies up. It didn't really work, even though the store ordered hundreds and hundreds of copies because they thought it was such a cool idea. The only thing Wall Streeters are interested in doing is working hard all day, making serious amounts of money, and getting shit-faced at night. They don't really do anything in between. But ABC went down there and filmed outside the store and asked investors walking by what they thought of *The Communist Manifesto*, so we got quite a lot of television and media coverage out of it just being there.

That's the difference between New York and San Francisco, where we are, because here the Dot Commers would eat that stuff up. They'd all want a coffee table copy of *The Communist Manifesto*, like the *Wired* people for example. A lot of the high tech types are libertarian-leftists. *Wired* actually did something on it.

Yeah, we got a fantastic amount of coverage on the book. I think we probably sold between 60 and 70,000 copies.

How does that rank amongst your best selling titles?

I suppose it's up there in the top 20. Quite possibly even in the top 10.

Aside from honoring the anniversary of the original *Manifesto's* publication, what were the political reasons you decided to publish it?

What we hope is the case is that shorn of the dead weight of Stalinism, which both myself and Verso come from have always been implacably opposed to, that Marx will get a new lease of life.

Globalization sure has been a big help.

Without sounding too fuddy-duddy about it, while I think that what happened in Seattle and DC was very uplifting, it seems that what's motivating a lot of people is a kind of moral stance, not something which is underpinned by a deep understanding of how the world's working. Or how alternatives to the way it works might be constructed.

Sure. It's a little bit like saying "Money is bad."

In the '70s, when I was in my 20s, the core of the left were revolutionary organizations. For all of their shortcomings, and they had a lot of them, they put a lot of

stand what it is you're fighting against and what it is you're fighting for. But I think that in this case, it seems pretty evident to me that action is preceding theory. I hope that when people want to begin and try and understand in more depth what it is they're up against, the Verso list is one of the things that they'll be able to turn to.

Other than repackaging books like *The Communist Manifesto*, what does an independent, leftist publisher like yourself have to do in order to survive in such a market?

Obviously we carry much lower overheads than large corporations. We aren't paid as



Yeah. At the moment there's only one game in town, which is globalization. But on the other hand, there's only one other game that you can really turn to. There's not really anything in between. If you're not going to accept capitalism as a way of running the world, well what system are you going to accept? Some sort of planned economy under worker control of some sort or another. That's the only alternative. The *Manifesto's* republication was a first shot at trying to win a new audience who are beginning to understand the terrible shortcomings of globalization, back to a some sort of socialist perspective.

This certainly makes sense given the very strong critique of capitalism that's been offered by the anti-globalization movement at the last three anti-capitalist gatherings in Seattle, DC and London. Yet they don't seem to be totally schooled in any particular leftist tradition such as socialism. They appear to be offering a synthesis that spans Marxist, anarchist and environmentalist thought among other things.

effort into education. We used to read enormous amounts of stuff to try and understand what it was that was going on. It was part of the internal democracy of the organizations we were in. People in their 20s today are generally not coming out of that kind of background.

At least in the States, if people are going to read any of that kind of literature, it's going to be through more traditional academic paths, like in a history, political science or cultural studies course where they encounter some of this material as something to learn for a test. For example, two or three weekends ago, *The New York Times* ran an article where a number of radical professors who specialized in post-colonial studies like Homi Bhabha took credit for partially inspiring the intellectual current of the anti-globalization movement.

I'm more inclined to see it the other way around. I generally believe that theory comes out of practice. You get drawn into these things because you feel as though you've got to do something because of your material circumstances. Then when you're in, you're forced to try and under-

much, and the offices aren't as grand. We don't lash out on big advances in the way that the big houses do. It'd be very rare for us to pay an advance of over \$20,000. I'm not saying that we don't publish authors' books well, because we publish them better than anyone else could. But I think we ask writers to discriminate in our favor, and it happens. People who could get much bigger sums elsewhere stay with us. And it isn't just because they share our political commitments and do it for philanthropic reasons. It's because they think that we will probably produce the books more beautifully than anyone else.

Certainly the style of Verso's presentations of its books has set an aesthetic standard for a lot of other independent publishing houses, the last 10 years in particular.

There's no economy of scale in producing beautiful books. You can produce beautiful books if you want to. Especially if you have a discriminating eye and you use people who are talented enough to do it. I know a lot of the designers that we use do it because they want to see their

work in the Verso list, and they're going to have to subsidize it with the work they do for Phillip Morris or whomever. And you know, sometimes they can't do that. But often enough, even people who aren't that political, but like the feel of what we're doing offer to do a few books for us. So we can get them to do it very cheaply. Authors genuinely know that their books will be produced beautifully. And I think they'll know that they would be marketed in an imaginative way. ¶ I don't really think that radical publishing is just publishing books with radical ideas in them. Obviously that's a large part of

we were turning up with *Missionary Position*. It must have annoyed the hell out of them. But on the other hand, it got us a lot of coverage that we couldn't otherwise have done. ¶ You can do that if you don't really care too much about the established etiquette of the business. It's the easiest thing in the world to do. On several occasions, people have offered to buy Verso—not to mention lure our employees away to go work at mainstream companies. The reason why we don't do that is because there is some value to being independent. In the end, particularly in cultural production, the record of

But Pat Buchanan wouldn't pass muster?

No, of course not. We'd never publish anything that's homophobic or racist. But what I mean is that I certainly know of left presses where they've turned down a book because its had a different political line on, for example, what went on in Nicaragua than the house agreed with. I'm talking about that kind of very specific political line that certain kinds of left organizations espouse. We've never done that. There'd be huge disagreements amongst Verso authors—quite a number of whom if you put in a room with one

OS NOI



the fortitude of a remarkable man to regain his world at the legendary Rumble in the Jungle in 1974.

in *Redemption Song*, Mike Marqusee takes the reader on an eye-opening excursion through the politics and culture of the 1960s, using the magisterial but often contrived career of "the greatest" as his guiding thread. His part of the cover is both tender and compelling, and provokes a sense of awe and wonder.

I don't really think that radical publishing is just publishing books with radical ideas in them. Obviously that's a large part of it. But there's a way in which you can apply radical ideas to *all* aspects of the publishing process, like the design, which we really try to push to the edges.

it. But there's a way in which you can apply radical ideas to *all* aspects of the publishing process, like the design, which we really try to push to the edges. Certainly in marketing we try and do things in unusual ways, like the sort of things we were doing with *The Communist Manifesto*, where we quite openly borrowed Situationist techniques to market the *Manifesto*. We've done other things where we'll slipstream our marketing on someone else's, which is probably very annoying for them. But you know, when we put out Christopher Hitchens' *The Missionary Position*, we made sure that we published it about the same time that Mother Teresa's own book called *A Simple Path* was published by Random House. ¶ It was a huge book with a million first printing and a full page ad in *The New York Times* and so on. We issued a press release saying, "A Simple Psychopath?" Basically everywhere that Random House went with *A Simple Path*,

people who've been taken over—generally what happens is that they're given enormous assurances at the time that they're taken over that the purchaser has always respected what they've done and will certainly do nothing to compromise their independent stand. And then a year or two down the line some financial crisis comes up and the whole thing just gets folded into whatever conglomerate they're a part of. That's sort of sad. We're very resistant to that.

How do you see Verso in relation to other leftist presses, like AK Press, Pluto and South End?

I've certainly got a lot of time for all of them. I definitely hope they grow and prosper. I know the guys at AK in particular. I think they do a great job. I suppose the thing I'd say about Verso is that we've never ever had any particular political line beyond being broadly on the left. We'd never turn down a book because we'd disagree with its politics.

another, you'd end up with a fight on your hands. Nonetheless, within the framework of being a left publisher, we've always had a very non-dogmatic approach to what we publish. ¶ The other thing is that Verso is not interested in being a small publisher. I remember that in 1990, we won the small publisher of the year award in the UK. For the year that we were fated as that, I was aware of the double-edged quality of that compliment. It never seemed to me that being small had anything going for it at all. I think that we would like to be a mainstream radical publisher. Both of those words are pretty vague, but there doesn't seem to be any particular advantage to always being seen as marginal. And we wouldn't be interested in being seen as not being political. It's all a question of how you combine those two together. If we could have the front cover of *Publisher's Weekly* four times a year in order to publicize audacious, radical books, that would truly be a wonderful thing. ©

Electrical Audio

Two years ago, I had the opportunity to record with Steve Albini in Chicago's Electrical Audio studio. One of the most interesting things I learned from my experience there was not a new way of setting a mic or a new trick on the billiards table in the lobby, it was learning about the way the studio was built and run. Though Electrical is almost always identified with its infamous proprietor, Albini, it's much more of a collectively run endeavor run by a community of like-minded artists who not only happen to work together, but also built the place from the ground up. The studio's environment radiates the physical and ideological investment that everyone who works there put into the place, literally. It manifested itself in how all of its employees related to one another and how they treated

artists like me who came in to record. It was incredibly inspiring, because it seemed like a neat metaphor for the way any artistic community, not just punk, ought to be.

Ever since I first recorded there, I've come back to visit on a number of different occasions in order to say hello to the people I met and renew my acquaintance with the place's vibe. Once I stumbled in and found Albini gone, only to see Greg Norman working on a 90 Day Men record, Casey Rice on some project or another and interns using the studio for projects of their own and jobs that they take as engineers. Why not? They all built the fucking place. I think this is why the staff there seems to take so much pride in their work (they even wear matching coveralls to work every day by choice).

The fact that Electrical Audio not only seems to be in sync with its original objectives, but also growing with them, should serve as an example to those who fear that punk's idealism is always ground down by its tiresome relationship with the world of work and commerce. Balances can indeed be struck, as long as the right kinds of institutions are thoughtfully put into place. Electrical Audio happens to be one of them.

Stoked by my last visit, I got a chance to correspond with the staff at Electrical Audio recently. I wanted them to help dispel myths about the place, tell stories and share their experiences on how they came to do what it is they do.

Interview by **Luis Illades**



What do each of you do at the studio, and how did you end up there?

Steve Albini: Electrical Audio had its beginnings in the studio built in 1986 by Big Black in a bungalow on Chicago's northwest side. We were going to record our final album, and agreed that it would give us a sense of accomplishment to do it ourselves, at home. Instead of spending money at a studio, we spent it on equipment and got to work. ¶ Through fits and starts, and then by leaps and bounds, the studio grew from an informal recording setup into, ultimately, a professional 24-track studio with a full-time staff, still housed in a modest neighborhood bungalow. Over the years, the staff has included a dozen or more people. Two people who were instrumental in building the place are Tom Zaluckyj who was construction foreman at the new building, but also did everything from make records as an engineer to roast coffee beans, and Pete Conway, who taught everyone carpentry and construction. ¶ We had the idea that we could build a studio, staff it and operate on punk rock ideals, and it could be a place for bands to get things done. Over the years, the little house played host to hundreds of bands, on the principle that a studio could operate without the burdens of formality, expense and technical limitations that were the norm of the time. In 1995, I risked everything I had ever earned and bought the building we currently

reside in, and a dedicated crew of self-taught punk rock craftsmen built Electrical. Many of them still work here, and I owe them my life. Punk rockers can do anything they decide to. If NASA hired only punk rockers, we'd be having picnics on Mars by now.

Bill Skibbe: I came to work for Steve about four years ago. It was one of the first days of construction—digging trenches in the basement. Throughout the course of building the B studio, I became “the electrical guy,” and started working with the electricians. I was responsible for large percentage of conduit runs in both studios for power and audio lines. Rob Bochnik and I were responsible for finishing out most of the A studio. We went from a crew of about 14 to a crew of five, and then just to four. I think it took us about a year, from February to December to finish “A.” The walls were already built, but nothing else was done. It was quite a job.

Rob Bochnik: When I was in high school, I started to record myself and make my own demos. My goal was to get the sounds in my imagination onto tape, or to just record as many interesting sounds as I could and see what happened. After that, I recorded the band I was in, learned what works and what doesn't work. ¶ While in college, Jim O'Rourke asked if I was looking for an internship, I said yes, and he said that Steve Albini was looking for interns. I said, “Please, do *everything* in your power to get

me that internship.” I was interviewed by Tom [Zaluckyj of Tar, who was the general contractor for the bulk of the studio's construction] and became an intern. I saw it as an opportunity of a lifetime that fell right into my lap. ¶ I assisted Tom and Pete Conway with the demolition and construction of Electrical Audio. I learned demolition, basic carpentry, adobe and concrete block masonry, tuck-pointing, drywall, interior finishing, roof patching, how to manage my fear of heights, how to read, understand, and implement architectural drawings, basic studio room design and construction. In late 1997, I was put in charge of finishing the construction of studio A and the remaining parts of the building with Bill Skibbe. Now I do assisting and engineering.

Russ Arbutnot: My job at Electrical is as an audio engineer. Although I mostly am an assistant engineer for guest engineers, I am capable of being the engineer on a session. When I'm not engineering, I take care of the “session advance,” which just means that I talk to people who are coming to record at the studio and figure out the details of the session prior to them showing up. This way Steve, or the house engineer, knows what to expect when they start working on the session. When I'm not doing that, I fill in the gaps of whatever else needs to be done around the studio whether its cleaning, repairing, errands or whatever.

Greg Norman: I engineer sessions and fix broken equipment. How I ended up here started back in high school. I bought a microphone, stand, and DJ mixer from Radio Shack one day, and learned how to overdub with two cassette decks. I learned all the parts to a Beatles song just so I could see how it works. From there, I started recording shows and bands with equipment I would borrow from my school and from friends. With the help of my summer and weekend moving job, I acquired a small arsenal of equipment through which I was enabled to record a number of demos. Mainly, I had fun recording me and my friends. ¶ I moved to Montana for college and a change of scenery. I learned a little bit of professional recording outside of class there, but I wanted to live back in Chicago again. During Christmastime, I went to a show in Chicago where I met Al Johnson. After telling him that I wanted to work somewhere recording-related that summer, he told me to give Steve a call, and he gave me the number. That spring I started interning at his house, and also working gutting the insides of the new building.

So if Electrical is "the studio that punk built," who built it exactly?

Rob: Every laborer who worked on the building was either a musician or related to music. Jeff Pezzati of Naked Raygun was responsible for the Heating Ventilation, Air conditioning (HVAC), Pegboy did the plumbing, Tom Zaluckyj of Tar was the general contractor for the bulk of the construction. Pete "Flour" Conway of Rifle Sport, Breaking Circus, and Pigface was the head carpenter who taught all of us about carpentry. Tony Jones of Sixteen Tons and Luckyj helped install all of the HVAC ductwork. Bill Schwartz of Ultra Swiss did some basic carpentry and Preston W. Long moved bricks for a day. Chad Smith of Mound and Mount Shasta worked masonry and Matt Clark of Pinebender stained/finished doors and

trim. Dave Duvall [formerly at Touch and Go] is currently the chief wood builder.

Where do you see Electrical Audio in the recording world?

Rob: Our goal is to offer a place where a band or an artist can make records. The environment is comfortable, like staying at a friend's house, and private. The attitude is geared toward efficiency and good final results. It seems as though it is harder to find a decent place to make records nowadays.

Steve: Electrical was built to be part of a community of musicians, none of whom can afford to pay the rates at big studios, so we charge a lot less. This allows bands we admire and respect to work in better circumstances than their budgets would normally allow, and makes us feel good about helping to support the independent mindset and the people in it. In short, being a bargain makes us feel good about our place in the world, and that is worth more than money. ¶ One of the studios here costs \$600 per day, which still strikes me as a fair bit of money. One tangible benefit of our relatively low price is that it keeps the other studios in Chicago reasonable. If people know they can come here for six bills, other studios have a hard time charging more. Even if they haven't come here to record yet, all the bands in the area are benefiting a little bit from this pricing policy and that lets us sleep better as well.

Bill: I think that the most exciting thing about recording an album is that you get to be in the band you're recording. You get to work with your friends. For me it means that I get one more music-related outlet for my Capricorn work obsession.

What do you think are some of the most common myths and misconceptions about Electrical Audio?

Rob: I think the biggest misconception about Electrical Audio is that it is exclusively Steve Albini's studio. Technically it is, but any engineer is welcome to work here. Electrical is its own entity, separate

from Steve alone, consisting of all the people who work there: Greg, Bill, Chris, Russ, Diamond, Steve, and myself. Aside from that, there are four other engineers, Rob, Greg, Bill and Russ, who have had the privilege of learning about Steve's recording techniques and adapted them into their own unique styles. I think this is the perfect studio for any engineer and musical entity to make records in. It is not a cold, alienating environment, but one that inspires creativity. Of course, there are some people who shouldn't record here or shouldn't care about this establishment, namely those who rely on some sort of "magical studio technology" to make them sound good. This studio can properly document the performance of anyone who has the skill or balls to do so. I believe that our strongest trait is to document what already exists rather than create something that doesn't.

What do you think sets Electrical apart from other studios?

Greg: I think our place has a perfect marriage between a friendly, home-like atmosphere, and a recording studio with an acoustical, and equipment setting unmatched in Chicago for recording performances. There are about 43,000 studios in Chicago—almost one for every Starbucks! The ease of making your own studio these days, because of the availability of cheap digital and left-over rickety analog recorders has made it simple to record. However, people do notice a real, tangible difference in the quality of their recordings when they're done with well maintained, fancy equipment.

Steve: For me, Electrical is the physical embodiment of doing-it-yourself, and it demonstrates that this can be done to exacting, high standards. I know this place will outlast me and continue to be a resource for people I feel a kinship with. I'm proud of the men who built this place, and I feel honored that I get to work with them here everyday. ©

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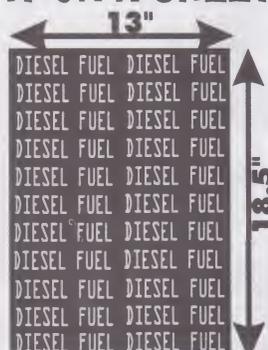
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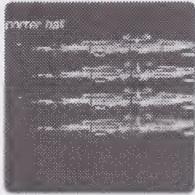
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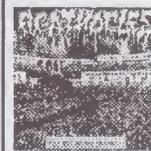
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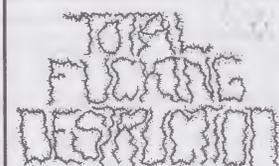
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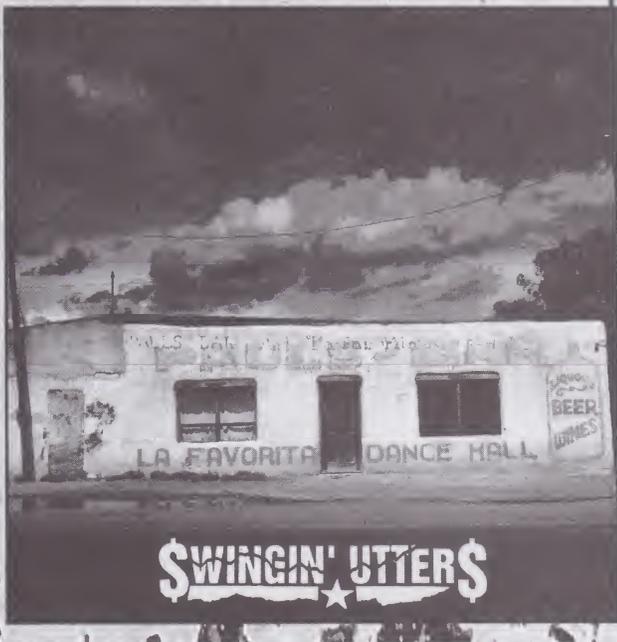
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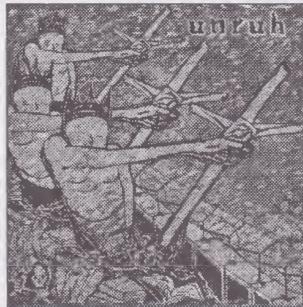
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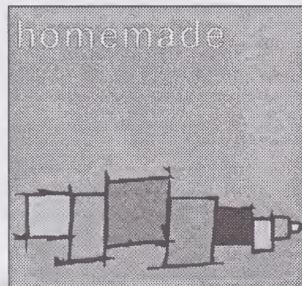


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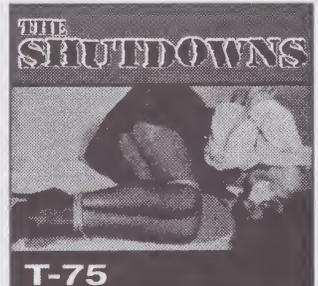
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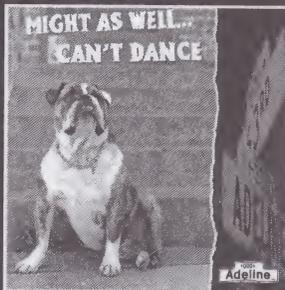
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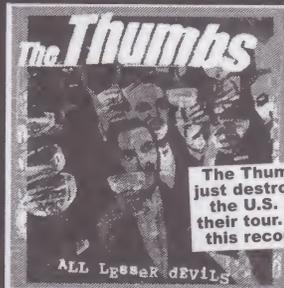
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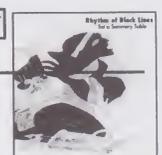


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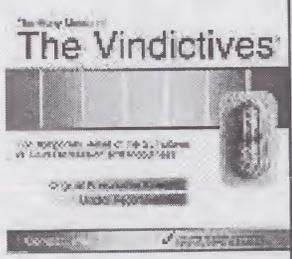
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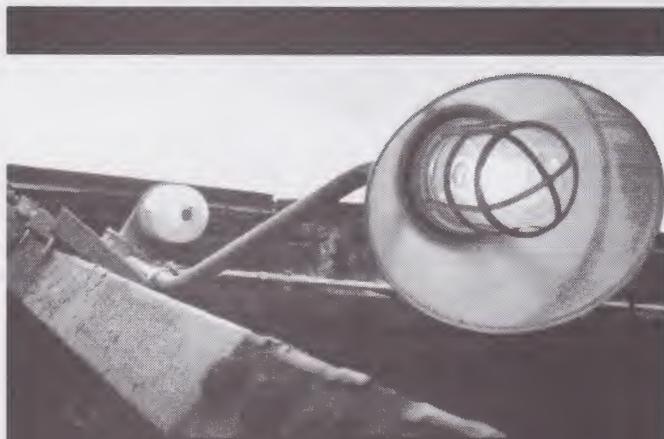
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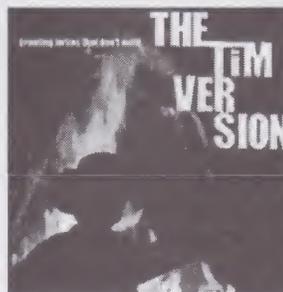
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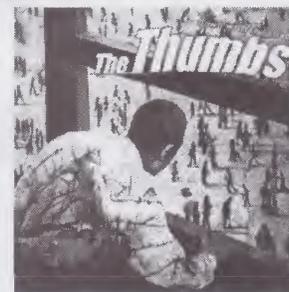
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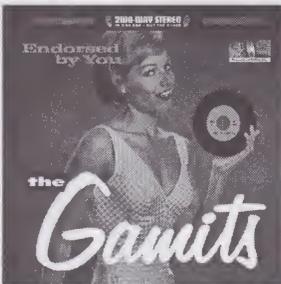
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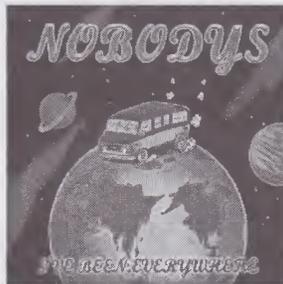
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Meet the New Boss



These are dark days for democracy. In one corner, you have a candidate who has raised tens of millions of dollars, mainly from corporate interests; who is promising a larger military and more intervention in countries like Columbia; who wants to expand the death penalty and put even more cops out on the street; who talks about a creating a moral society by cracking down on the entertainment industry; and who fills in the cracks with weak promises about social security, education and a laundry list of other concerns. And then you have George W Bush.

As more and more people are starting to raise their voices in concern about the growing influence of globalization, the alarming speed with which the prison population is growing, the abysmal lack of healthcare—or any social safety net—for millions of Americans, or the widening abyss between the haves and have nots in society, the two major party candidates for President bicker about whose plan to add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare is better, or whether increasing military spending by \$90 billion or \$100 billion is better. Yet the mainstream media, not to mention their vocal supporters, portrays George W Bush and Al Gore as if they are as different as night and day.

We here at Punk Planet feel that that's just simply not the case. We decided to talk Jeffrey St Clair and JH Hatfield, authors of recent critical biographies of the two candidates to bring the public picture of the two men into better focus. It's critical to understand where these two men are coming from in both their background and their policies, as one of the two of them—barring miracle or act of god—will be running the show for the next four years.

These interviews aren't easy reads—in fact, they're downright scary. They give a glimpse of the man lurking beneath the media gloss, and it's not a pretty sight. These interviews bring a new urgency to what Ralph Nader said in his acceptance speech for the Green Party Nomination: "If you do not turn on to politics, politics will turn on you."

Introduction by **Daniel Sinker**

Illustration by **Paul Chan**



There is a degree of wish fulfillment—if not outright self-delusion—among going to fight the oil companies, who's going to stand up for wilderness reminds me of a situation akin to spousal abuse syndrome—someone who

Writing a critical biography of Al Gore—especially one that critiques Gore from the left, not the right—isn't a way to win popularity contests. But Jeffrey St Clair and Alexander Cockburn, the authors of *Al Gore: A User's Guide*, didn't write their book to win friends, they wrote it to voice their disgust at a man that St Clair calls "an all-around despicable piece of work." The book presents a Gore you rarely hear about in the mainstream media: one that sells out environmental groups, attacks the first amendment, runs homophobic campaigns, fights against the poor, is anti-abortion...the list compiled by St Clair and Cockburn goes on and on.

I got to speak with Jeffrey St Clair about who the *real* Al Gore is in September. Our talk was eye-opening to say the least.

Interview by **Daniel Sinker**

I thought we'd begin by asking a question that Gore himself has answered a few times already this campaign: Who is the real Al Gore?

Al Gore A Wolf in Sheep

I think that the idea of there being multiple Al Gores is something of a myth. I think that there *is* a real Al Gore, but some of his supporters are unwilling to accept who he really is. He has been able to create this false image through two factors. Number one, he knows the rhetoric of liberalism and he can turn that on when he has to. When he's speaking to environmentalists or feminist groups, or even when he's occasionally talking to labor, he knows how to talk their language. On the other hand though, there is a degree of wish fulfillment—if not outright self-delusion—among those very same progressive or liberal interest groups which *want* there to be an alternate Al Gore. They want a progressive, populist Al Gore who's going to fight the oil companies, who's going to stand up for wilderness areas, who's going to protect the first amendment, who's going to oppose the death penalty. This is a kind of self-delusion that reminds me of a situation akin to spousal abuse syndrome—someone who has been beaten so many times, but still can't walk out the door. Because Al Gore at his core isn't those things. ¶ His first campaign for Congress in 1976 set out the Al Gore political template. He was "tough" on crime—this is a guy who in '76 was talking about minimum mandatory sentences and the death penalty. He was a hawk from 1976 on—he said, "We've got to get over Vietnam syndrome." What did that mean? It meant that in the '70s, people were finally thinking, "Hey, maybe American hegemony isn't the best thing for our country or the rest of the world." Al Gore essen-

tially said, "No, we have to get over that. We need to be interventionists. We need a strong military. We need to fund nuclear weapons." This was in '76. He was—despite what you hear now from feminist groups—anti-abortion to the very core. It manifested itself through denying abortions to poor women, but he was voting for some of the most outlandish of measures instituted by the Christian Right in congress. He wrote letters stating his belief that abortion was immoral; he voted for an amendment that essentially defined life as beginning at conception. *That is the real Al Gore* ¶ I think that there is an oedipal explanation to this. Despite of his faux-Tennessee accent, where he starts dropping his Gs when he gets off the East Coast, he grew up in the Fairfax Hotel in Washington DC. He went to an elite prep school there. He was bounced on the lap of Richard Nixon. He went swimming with Strom Thurmond when he was a kid. But his father was something of a populist. Al Gore Sr was one of Roosevelt's foot soldiers in constructing the New Deal.

He was one of the earliest opponents in the Senate of the Vietnam war. As a Southerner—and this isn't saying much, mind you—he was a moderate on civil rights. He told Strom Thurmond to stuff the Southern Manifesto up his ass. He was an early opponent of the stockpiling of nuclear weapons. He was an architect of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. He was a Southern, populist, New Deal liberal. But he was defeated in the 1970 election by the candy fortune heir, Bill Brach who ran a racist campaign. The word whispered in rural Tennessee during the campaign about Al Gore Sr was that he was a "pinko, commie, nigger lover." Brach's campaign was funded in part by one of Nixon's slush funds, called Operation Townhouse—they flushed in like \$300,000 dollars. They ran a campaign against him with commercials saying he was the "third senator from Massachusetts." Gore Sr narrowly lost. ¶ And I think what his son, Al Gore Jr, took away from that was that he was never going to be defeated from the right by being called a liberal. When he runs in '76, it's as a Southern Democrat, with everything that meant before the liberalism of his father. He gaybaited homosexuals in that campaign by calling homosexuality "abnormal"; he ran against abortion rights; he was a military hawk. He was basically an all-around despicable piece of work.

But his strategy must have worked. He didn't have very much beyond his name to get elected. He wasn't much of an activist; he wasn't very outspoken. In your book, you paint him as an average to below-aver-

progressive or liberal interest groups which *want* there to be an alternate Al Gore. They want a progressive, populist Al Gore who's areas, who's going to protect the first amendment, who's going to oppose the death penalty. This is a kind of self-delusion that has been beaten so many times, but still can't walk out the door. Because Al Gore at his core isn't those things.

age student. He claimed grandeur at his job at *The Tennessean*, but didn't do all that much. While serving in Vietnam, he managed to stay away from pretty much everything. He really didn't have much beyond his name and the beyond the ability to run from the right instead of from the left to get him elected, wouldn't you say?

I think that's exactly true. He was an indifferent student. His grades even in high school were marginal. Harvard was the only college he applied to and he was accepted there, despite his mediocre grades, most likely because his father was a United States Senator. He was floundering in his first two years at Harvard where he tried to be an English major until he was finally adopted in the Political Science department. It was more forgiving, I guess, of the children of politicians than the English department was. His political career at Harvard speaks a lot about Gore. He lived in Dunster house. It had a lot of SDS people in it. Harvard was kind of late to awaken to the anti war and civil rights movement, but when it

a senator, *particularly* a Senator who opposes the war dying or getting injured on his watch. Despite the photos of Gore carrying an M16 and his stories of what a horrific, life-changing experience Vietnam was, we quote one of his colleagues in Vietnam as saying, "Well, I think Al Gore had a pretty good time there. It's where he got introduced to Thai sticks and played a lot of basketball." That appears to have been his life, more or less, in Vietnam. ¶ Gore comes back from Vietnam and he flirts around with going to divinity school, where he gets all Fs and incompletes in a year and a half there. Suddenly he gets handed this job at *The Tennessean* by an editor there by the name of John Sigenthaler, who was a Kennedy Democrat. He saw Gore as an up-and-coming potential political star and thought that this would be a good launching pad for him. He had a mediocre career at the *Tennessean*, even though he was handed a good job. Gore didn't have to be a cub reporter—he was immediately assigned to the metro desk and given investigative reporting gigs. In his 1988 run for the presidency, he boasted that his stories put a lot of people in jail. They didn't. But he did manage to violate every tenant of journalistic ethics *trying* to get someone in jail. There was a black city councilman in Nashville who Gore had learned might be taking some kickbacks for approving zoning ordinances. So he runs a sting operation on the guy *with the police!* And then he goes and testifies during a grand jury proceeding and again at this guy's trial. This is a *journalist*. There was a hung jury and then eventually the guy was acquitted. The fact that this guy was acquitted caused Gore to basically renounce the profession of journalism. [Laughs] "I can't do the types of things that I want to do in the journalistic profession, obviously. I have to go to law school and then get elected to Congress and pass tougher laws that will put people away for many years." ¶ So he does exactly that and runs for Congress. The only thing he has going for him is the Gore name. On the other hand, his father just lost the election and is recognized as a liberal. It created this kind of tension between wanting to take advantage of the Gore name but at the same time saying, "I'm not like my father, I'm a centerist."

It's that branding of himself as a "centerist" that really annoys me. Gore's beliefs, especially when you look at his congressional record, aren't at all centerist. The tenants that he ran on, many of the things he voted for are very much right of center. He continues to do that to this day. He has grabbed the center and moved it significantly off center.

If you look at his 1988 run for the presidency, he was basically running *against* the Democratic party. It had become "too liberal;" it had before "captive of special interests"—i.e. minorities, blacks, gays and women. His campaign paralleled the beliefs of the Democratic Leadership Council, which was a group that Gore, Clinton, Bruce Babbitt and Joe Lieberman—who was the president of the DLC until he was picked to run for vice president—founded. It was a group of neo-liberal Democrats that wanted to make the Democratic party "business friendly." There are certain issues and code words that

's Clothing

finally did get going, a lot of people that were planning the demonstrations on campus were Al Gore's housemates. But Gore really distanced himself from this. He had a very dishonorable career at Harvard, I think. Even if you compare it to his running mate Joe Lieberman, who was running down to Mississippi to register voters while he was at Yale and was active in the civil rights movement. As much as now he's done an about face and wants to betray everything Martin Luther King stood for, at least there does seem to be some *hint* of past progressive political activism on the part of Lieberman. You can search high and low at Al Gore's career as a student during one of the most radical times ever on campus and not find a *hint* of that. ¶ Gore's decision to go to Vietnam was a calculated one that was based, I think, on putting together his own political resume. His father was an opponent of the war. You weren't going to have his son be an opponent of the war too. Gore has concocted a variety of excuses for why he went to Vietnam from his want to save one of his fellow citizens of Carthage Tennessee from going, but that doesn't really wash. In Vietnam, according to people that served with him, he basically smokes a lot of dope, drinks a lot of Budweiser and plays a lot of basketball. Whenever he ventures out into the bush, he's basically got a praetorian guard surrounding him with instructions from the Brigadier General there that under no circumstances is Al Gore supposed to get close to the action. He didn't want the son of



Gore has been able to screw the labor unions, screw the trial lawyers and industry and the biggest goldmine of all, Wall Street. The money from these

they would leap upon—tort reform, regulatory reform, “scaling back” affirmative action. Those types of issues are at the core of what the DLC was all about. Gore was their wunderkind—he was strong on defense; he was never a “captive” of organized labor; he wasn’t *about* to put a Geraldine Ferraro on the ticket. He was their shining light. ¶ But while Gore laid the groundwork in ’88 for the rise of the “new” Democrat, he never had Clinton’s political skills. Whatever you say about Clinton, his political gifts are enormous. The way he can stab you in the back while making you feel good is a very dangerous political attribute. [Laughs] Gore has never had that. There is a grimness to Gore that I think is very off-putting to many people. But in terms of his ideology, it was laid out in ’76 and got its coming out party when he ran for President in ’88. He’s a fiscal and cultural conservative who knows the rhetoric of liberalism and when he needs to, he turns it on. ¶ That’s what’s so irritating about him: occasionally he will give a speech that one of Teddy Kennedy’s speech writers could have written. He’s given them at the NAACP meeting, at AFL-CIO meetings, he’s given them to environmental groups. You need to do those to get out the vote, or maybe to do some threat inflation about what a fascist your opposition is. But he also believes that the center-right is the right place to be. And he’s never had to really pay a price for that from the left. Like I said earlier on, if you want to look at how Al Gore has been able to get to where he’s gotten, it’s because he hasn’t had to pay a price by the groups that he’s betrayed.

Why won’t they call him on his shit? It continues to stagger me. Just today, it was announced that Friends of the Earth endorsed Gore. You can go issue by issue: the AFL-CIO endorsed Gore and he gives them NAFTA; women’s groups endorse Gore while his congressional record shows that he’s anti-abortion and during the Clinton years there’s been little done to prop up abortion; gay groups endorse Gore, yet he was anti-gay in Congress and they weren’t given much during the Clinton years besides “Don’t Ask/Don’t Tell” and the signing of the Defense of Marriage Act. Is it just that these groups have to make the lesser of two evils choice, or what?

I think that they really find themselves in a similar position to the Christian Right during the Reagan/Bush era: they really don’t have anywhere else to turn. But at least the Christian Right would be feisty and actually throw up a Pat Buchanan or a Pat Robertson during the primaries to try and keep Reagan and Bush honest. ¶ I read an interview with Paul Welstone, who is something of a progressive in the Senate, and he was basically saying, “You can’t give up on the Democratic Party. Instead of going off and supporting the Green Party, you’ve got to work to redeem the Democratic Party.” I tend to think that it’s beyond redemption, but if we accept Welstone at his word, why didn’t the progressives run somebody against Gore in the primary? Organized labor has said “NAFTA was a stab in the back.” Environmental groups said the same thing. You had Gore using his “Reinventing Government” scam to do away with Affirmative Action—you would think that that would outrage the

Congressional Black Caucus, the NAACP and other civil rights groups. You have Gore and his wife and their co-hort Lieberman making some of the most fundamental attacks on the first amendment that we’ve seen recently—these attacks date back to Tipper’s war on rock lyrics. Of course, these attacks are a thinly veiled attack on teenagers, which plays into the war against teenagers which has been unrelenting during the Clinton/Gore years—a war on black teenagers especially. You would think that the civil libertarians who care about the First Amendment would have problems with Gore. You look at what they’ve done in terms of stripping away the rest of the Bill of Rights, with their war on drugs, their crime bill, their maddening pursuit of expanding the death penalty—60 new crimes, some of them not even including murder. They’re going beyond NAFTA and pushing through GATT and the WTO... You really have to *search* for an issue that Gore and Clinton have pushed for that progressives would endorse! And yet, they don’t run anyone against him in the primary and it’s almost an a-priori endorsement of the Clinton/Gore years. And the predictable result of that is you now have a Democratic ticket that inconceivably is to the right of the Clinton/Gore ticket!

Let’s talk about Gore’s involvement in the last eight years. It’s a fairly normal misconception that a Vice President doesn’t do very much. But in your book, you paint a very different picture. You say that on a lot of the votes that counted—things like welfare reform and NAFTA and the crime bill—Gore was really the driving force behind them. It was Gore pushing Clinton, who granted, doesn’t seem like he was a very difficult push, to sign these. How influential do you think Gore has been over the last eight years?

I think we can take him at his and Clinton’s word: He has been the most influential Vice President in history. But his influences have been mendacious, I think. And his influence started very early on. ¶ After the election, but before the inauguration, Clinton gave an interview to the *New York Times*, where they asked him about his policies on Iraq. Clinton responded essentially by saying, “Well, I’m a Southern Baptist and I believe in redemption and forgiveness. All Saddam has to do is change his behavior and a change in his behavior might end up in the sanctions being lifted.” This cut against the grain of official policy, which was that the sanctions would remain in place as long as Saddam was in power. Gore was sent out just hours later to correct the president’s statement. He said, “No, the president misspoke, our policy remains the same: Saddam is a snake and a demon and the sanctions will remain in place as long as he remains in power.” From that moment on, Gore was basically handed the reigns of the administration’s foreign policy. Ever since, it is something that Gore has been vitally influential in. ¶ On the subject of welfare reform, which dismantled one of the last cornerstones of the New Deal, Gore was the driving force behind that as well. During his Senate career, Gore voted again and again to whittle away at the federal welfare program. And during the ’92 campaign, he and Clinton went around

still go on raising money not only from them, but from a whole new universe of potential funders: oil companies, the entertainment financial houses has just poured into the coffers. Gore really has been a master at this, mostly because he's just so relentless.

the country saying that they would "end welfare as we know it," which sounds like a line out of a Monty Python movie. [laughs] But when the Democrats controlled congress during '93 and '94, they couldn't move their welfare reform package through. When the Republicans were elected in '94, they finally had their opportunity. But I think the Republicans didn't want to give Clinton and Gore a chance to take credit for the welfare reform bill, so they threw up really outlandish proposals. They sent six of these bills up to Clinton and Gore and they ended up vetoing all of them. ¶ As the '96 elections rolled around, the Republicans sent up another welfare reform bill that was much like all the previous versions. A meeting of the Clinton cabinet was called to discuss what they should do with this version of the bill. One by one, the members of his cabinet stood up and said, "Mr. President, you ought to veto this bill. It's too punitive, it's going to hit children the hardest and even though the polls suggest that people support this welfare bill, I think you could make the case that this is just too severe." The first of those speeches was made by likely suspects in the cabinet: Robert Reich, the labor secretary and Donna Shalala. But then Robert Ruben, the most pro-business person in the cabinet—he was a former Wall Street financial lord and now was the treasury secretary—stood up and also told Clinton that he should veto the bill. The whole time, Gore was in the room, but he didn't say a word. The cabinet was dismissed and a private meeting took place with just three people: Clinton, his chief of staff Leon Panetta and Gore. In this meeting, Gore made an impassioned plea that Clinton should sign the bill. And Clinton, who was wavering, was convinced by Gore and he signed it. It was one of the most despicable acts of his presidency.

One of the many things that has rung the most untrue in Gore's stump speeches and in his acceptance of the Democratic nomination of this year, is his pledge to enact campaign finance reform. This is coming from a man who has been known as the "solicitor in chief." Obviously, George Bush has been able to raise more money, but not significantly more. It seems to me like money has become more and more influential during the Clinton years. The administration has basically been up for sale.

The rap on the Democrats is that they've always been controlled by the labor unions and the trial lawyers. But Gore has been able to screw the labor unions, screw the trial lawyers and still go on raising money not only from them, but from a whole new universe of potential funders: oil companies, the entertainment industry and the biggest goldmine of all, Wall Street. The money from these financial houses has just poured into the coffers. Gore really has been a master at this, mostly because he's just so relentless. Gore had a style of badgering people. People on the receiving end of these calls have said that they felt they were being bullied into giving money; they felt like their pockets were being picked; it was almost like they were being mugged on the telephone. It's not just a fact of them raising all this money, but the fact that there have been quid pro quos for that, like getting four million dollars from Arco and

then opening up the north slope of Alaska to oil leasing that will benefit companies like Arco. ¶ Gore can say, "Yes, I am going to lead the crusade for campaign finance reform" because he knows that Congress is never going to pass any meaningful campaign finance reform. It's irrational to think that they ever would. Yet he can get away with that because look at who his opponent is. Bush is even *more* incredible than Gore is on the issue.

Going back just a second, you mentioned that one of the funding sources that Gore and Clinton have been able to open up has been the oil companies. I think that's one of the most interesting things you find when you dig into who Al Gore is. He has been able to reinvent himself since his first run with Clinton as this great environmentalist through his book *Earth in the Balance*. But the reality is quite different. The Clinton/Gore administration has basically done nothing for the environment except sell it off piece by piece.

That's quite true. David Brower, who is the dean of American environmentalists—he's the founder of Friends of the Earth—and at the age of 86 years old may still be the most radical environmentalist in the country, which is a sad state of affairs, has said that Clinton and Gore have done more to harm the environment in eight years than Reagan and Bush did in 12! ¶ When Clinton and Gore came to town, Gore had the reputation of being "ozone man," as Bush called him. But if you look at Gore's Congressional career, which *nobody* seems to do, he had a moderate by any standard and sub-moderate by democratic standards on voting on the environment. He voted for the environment 64% of the time. That was by a standard put forward by the League of Conservation Voters, which gears all of its criteria to give Democrats 80+ rankings and Republicans the lowest rankings they can possibly get. It's a rigged accounting method and under that rigged method, Gore only voted for the environment a little more than half the time. There were Republicans that had much better records than Gore on the environment. Gore didn't push through any major bills on the environment. He co-sponsored some bills on hazardous waste early on in his career, but he never really produced anything on the environment in a legislative sense as a Congressman or a Senator. But the environmental movement thought that they had one of their own when Gore and Clinton ran. ¶ This feeling was reinforced by the fact that when they went to put together political appointees, the Clinton administration picked people out of mainstream environmental groups and put them into positions at the EPA, the department of agriculture and the department of the interior. This created a syndrome that investigative reporter Mark Dowie called "reverse access." Instead of the environmental movement lobbying the Clinton administration to do something, you now had former environmental executives in the Clinton administration lobbying their former colleagues to swallow things that they would not have accepted under the Bush administration. This practice started very early on as well. ¶ In 1992, the largest hazardous waste incinerator in North America was being built in a town called East Liverpool,

Bush says that he's going to do for America what he's done for Texas. That's the great fallacy here. He says he truly loves Texas, issue of education. Bush is making a big deal out of that. But at the beginning of his first term in office, teacher's salaries in January 1999, they ranked 38th place.

Ohio. It was being built in the flood plane of the Ohio river 300 feet from the nearest house and 1000 feet from an Elementary school that sat on the bluff of the river. The smokestack from this hazardous waste incinerator was basically at eye-level to the school. Gore and Clinton both went to Ohio and said, "Under our administration, we're going to stop this plan. It's going to be one of the first things we're going to do. You *can not* put hazardous waste incinerators in a flood plane and you sure as heck can't put them this close to houses and schools." They vowed repeatedly that they were going to deny the incinerator an air permit. What happened? Within weeks of taking office, they reversed course. They gave the plant a test-burn permit. It failed its two test burns—it was emitting lead and mercury and arsenic. Where it was supposed to eliminate 99.7% of these toxins it was actually only burning like 10% of them. But even after it failed those test burns, they ended up giving it its final permit and now, of course, it's burning all this hazardous waste and there are all the predictable illnesses amongst children and other residents. Gore explained this about face by saying, "Our hands were tied by the Bush administration." That is flatly a lie. Why did they really sign off on it? Well, it turns out that the chief financial underwriter of the WTI incinerator was an Arkansas financial lord by the name of Jackson Stevens, who had loaned the Clinton/Gore campaign 10 million dollars during their time of need. If the Bush administration had pulled that kind of betrayal, they would have just been hammered, but Clinton and Gore was able to get away with it. ¶ The other issue had to do with the ancient forests on National Forest land, where logging during the '70s and 80s had basically put a whole lot of animals living in the old growth forest on the brink of extinction, typified by the Northern Spotted Owl. Environmentalists went to court and said that if logging continues at the current pace, you'll violate the Endangered Species Act by driving the Spotted Owl to extinction. They won an injunction against all new timber sales in old growth on these Federal Lands in the Pacific Northwest, which was handed down by a Reagan-appointed judge named William Dwyer. It was probably one of the greatest environmental victories of the last 30 years. During their campaign, Clinton and Gore came out here and said, "We're going to resolve this crisis once and for all. We're going to get permanent protection for these old growth forests and we're going to do it within 90 days of taking office." So in the spring of 1993, they convened their "Timber Summit" out here in the Northwest and lo and behold they come up with a plan that *restarts* logging in the national forests! They arm twisted the environmentalists with a threat that basically said that unless they allowed logging to begin again that they would go to Congress and request what's called "sufficiency language." What that does is insulate these timber sales from any environmental laws like the Endangered Species Act so that you can't sue them for violating the law. They said they had to do this because promises had been made to timber companies and some of the unions on the West Coast, like the carpenters union. ¶ On these two key issues that they campaigned on, they

betrayed the environmentalists thoroughly. That set in place a pattern that you saw in NAFTA, which is one of the rare instances where environmentalists and labor have come together to fight an issue. Gore played a key role in stuffing NAFTA down the throats of both groups. He recruited some of the more conservative environmental groups, groups like the Audubon society and the World Wildlife Fund to get on board with NAFTA. 900 environmental groups opposed NAFTA and five supported it, but Gore goes on the morning talk shows and says, "I'm a great environmentalist and the great environmental groups are supporting NAFTA." It played a key role in shifting some of the debate on NAFTA. Even though the middle class may not be sensitive to the issues of labor, they are sensitive to the environment, and when they heard Gore saying that NAFTA was going to be better for the environment and that he had five environmental leaders to back this up, it was a decisive movement.

Switching gears here: Hypothetically, if Gore and Lieberman actually get elected, what do you think we can expect?

We can expect the continuation of the pro-business policies of the Clinton administration but in hyperspeed. On top of that, what we're going to get is this new prudishness, this new Puritanism that Clinton could have never delivered on and I don't think was particularly interested in.

Gore and Lieberman are *unrestrained* in their prudishness. I think that we're in for a spate of culture wars that were talked about briefly during Dan Quale's assault on Murphy Brown, but at

a *much* higher level. I see that as really being a dangerous assault. And it's an assault that goes hand in hand with the exacerbation of the drug war which is putting black people in jail in the US at alarming rates and is leading to war against Columbia. The drug war is a rubric. It's a ruse at home where it's used to incarcerate the "dangerous element" of society, and it's a ruse overseas where we use it to justify funneling billions of dollars of military supplies, helicopters weapons and advisers to Columbia where we say that we're fighting the drug war but what we're really doing is protecting the oil companies interests in Columbia. If Gore and Lieberman are elected, we'll see the continuation of this war on the poor and it will be combined with a culture war. In the end, you've got a really dangerous recipe. What you hear from a lot of the liberals is that you can't allow George Bush to be elected president because it's the coming wedge of fascism. But in terms of assaults on the Bill of Rights, you don't have to look any further than Gore and Lieberman to see the coming face of a really culturally repressive regime. ☺

Daddy's

but his record shows that he truly *doesn't* like Texans. Take for example the Texas ranked 36th out of 50 states. By the beginning of his second term



For writing a book that, among many other facts, alleges that George W Bush was arrested for cocaine possession in the 1972, only to get out of a conviction thanks to his family name, JH Hatfield has seen his name destroyed in the press and his book destroyed in the furnace. It's a shame, because Hatfield's book, *Fortunate Son* (which was saved from complete destruction by New York's Soft Skull Press, who reissued it after its original publisher, St Martins, torched it) is a meticulously researched and eye-opening biography of the Republican nominee for President.

I got a chance to speak with Hatfield about his book in September. What emerged was a fascinating look at Governor Bush's political career, not to mention a discussion about Hatfield's fate at the hands of his former publisher.

Interview by Joel Schalit

I've been carefully following the criticisms of the Bush campaign in the press—both by the media and by the Democrats—and I can't help but sense some parallels between their critiques and your book. I would imagine there's been some crossover, particularly when such sources identify moral problems with Bush's political record.

I get a lot of e-mail through back channels. I've been told that the Gore campaign has gone through *Fortunate Son*, bookmarked it and put post-it notes all over it. Although the afterword was played up because of its allegations of cocaine use, three-quarters of the

term in January 1999, they ranked 38th place. Bush makes a big deal out of SATs, but while scores of the Texas assessment of academic skills which compares Texans only to each other and not to a national norm have risen internally, Texas SAT scores have not. He has done *nothing* for education. ¶ As far as the environment, my wife is a fifth generation Texan, and all my in-laws live in Texas. I can't even *breathe* when we go there. Bush likes to take credit for the good stuff, but the bad stuff he claims to not have any power over. Nonetheless, he does with the environment. He grandfathered these clean air acts in Texas that allow polluters, such as his campaign contributors Enron, a large oil company, years to clean up their acts. The fact of the matter is that the environment in Houston and Texas alone is terrible. Texas ranks *first* in toxic air releases. Its also first in smog days. They have smog detectors outside of schools because kids are so small, so they're closer to the ground where smog is worse. Asthma is higher in Texas than just about anywhere.

But what about Bush's emphasis on kids?

That's his big thing. He says that he's not going to leave any child behind.

But that totally contradicts the information you provide in your book about child poverty rates in Texas under Bush's governorship.

Boy George W Bush

book is about Bush's record, about who the guy *really* is. The afterword is the icing on the book's cake, so to speak, about a guy who really is a "Fortune Son" who cashed in on his name and his father's connections. In 1994, when he ran against former Texas Governor Anne Richards, all the guy had ever done was buy into a baseball team and be the son of a President. If his name had been George P Smith, he would have never beaten Anne Richards, a very charismatic governor who was well known outside of Texas.

In *Fortunate Son*, you problematize Bush's record on race, the environment, human rights, health care, and poverty. Could you talk about these issues a little bit?

What Governor Bush says that he's going to do for America what he's done for Texas. That's the great fallacy here. He says he truly loves Texas, but his record shows that he truly *doesn't* like Texans. Take for example the issue of education. Bush is making a big deal out of that. But at the beginning of his first term in office, teacher's salaries in Texas ranked 36th out of 50 states. By the beginning of his second

Two days ago a judge ruled that Texas had failed to live up to its 1996 agreement to make major changes in its Medicaid system. Basically, the state has failed to inform families with children enrolled in Medicaid about benefits that they could have collected. The Gore campaign would be stupid not take this fact and run with it, beat the guy over the head with his record. ¶ Once again, we're talking about a guy whose not really a two-term governor—he's only been in office five and a half years. The last time we had someone with such limited political experience running for president was Jimmy Carter. No matter what your political affiliations, we all know what the results of that were.

What about Bush's death penalty record? There's a lot of information in your book about that.

I got a letter from a 17-year old boy from Texas the other day, telling me how much he enjoyed the book. In his letter, he called Bush the "Texecutioner." This kid pegged it.

I found the story of the execution of the Canadian, Joseph Falder, the most interesting. Would you talk a little bit about that?

Much of Bush's campaign money came from contributors with major stakes in state regulation, including oil and other large seeking relief from expensive civil suits and caps on damage awards; and conservatives advocating school vouchers.

That's a classic example. Bush has what I call an "Alamo Complex," and it has survived all these years. I'm not knocking Texans, but they do have this complex that goes way back where they feel that the federal government shouldn't tell them what to do. I mean you had everybody calling him on this: nuns, human rights organizations, foreign governments, everybody. Even Jerry Falwell called Bush on this case.

Bush didn't budge, even though religious conservatives have been his staunchest of backers. What I thought was most interesting about the Falder case was its very poor sense of timing. If it demonstrated anything, it showed Bush's utter contempt for human rights.

Right. The day he had scheduled to execute Falder was the 50th anniversary of the United Nations' Declaration of Human Rights. That's so typical of Bush. He'd say, "I don't care what day of the week it is. It's time for him to be executed." They execute people that are mentally retarded in Texas. Facts like that are irrelevant to Bush.

Another area that you touch on in the book is Bush's adept ability to raise money. Bush has blown the doors off previous fundraising records in the Presidential race. How has he been able to raise so much money? Where is it coming from? What was his precedent for this? Was he able to raise such staggering funds for his races for Governor?

As I point out in *Fortunate Son* in a section called "Follow the Money," Bush set a new presidential fund-raising record by assembling an astonishing \$37 million in the first six months of 1999. The amount was more than any candidate had ever raised for an entire primary race, much less the four months Bush had been soliciting contributions. This pace has continued for over a year now. When asked by the press to explain this outpouring of support, Bush curtly offered it was because he had a "wonderful personality" and had "a lot of friends." The source of one-third of the initial \$37 million contributed to his presidential campaign's war chest originated in his home state of Texas, where he tapped into a network formed during his father's career—he also inherited his mother's infamous Christmas card list of contacts and financial supporters going back over 30 years. Although the Bush campaign boasted that a populist "grassroots organization" of 75,000 concerned Americans in all 50 states had contributed an average \$480 or less, the real force behind Bush's fund-raising machine was, and remains, an elite tier of \$100,000 fund-raisers known as "Pioneers." Because federal law limits individual contributions to \$1,000, each Pioneer fulfilled a pledge to raise at least \$100,000 for the campaign by soliciting contributions of \$1,000 from 100 people. It's interesting to note that a precedent for this type of fund-raising was established in Bush's two successful bids for governor of Texas in 1994 and 1998, when he raised \$41 million—more than any candidate for governor in US history. Much of Bush's campaign money came from contributors with major stakes in state regulation, including oil and other large industrial companies opposed to mandatory pollution controls; businesses seeking relief from expensive civil suits and caps on damage awards; and conservatives advocating school vouchers. And Bush wants to talk about Gore's alleged fund-raising abuses—talk about the pot calling the kettle black!

Bush obviously isn't the most qualified Republican in the field right now, why do you think he was chosen by the powers-that-be to be the party's chosen one?

Simply stated: brand name recognition. Over two years ago, hypothetical match-ups showed Bush defeating the putative Democratic nominee, Al Gore. So the Republicans decided to bet their money on this one horse: George W Bush. But history is full of early front-runners like George Romney, Edmund Muskie and Edward Kennedy, who at one time looked like certain winners to inherit the White House. But like Bush, they eventually had to campaign in other states, take a stand on the issues, counter their opponents' charges, avoid blunders and prove to the voters they had the prerequisite "fire in the belly" to run for president. The results for Romney, Muskie and Kennedy proved disastrous to their campaigns. ¶ I'll give Bush credit for this. He's very focused. Even Anne Richards said this on Larry King Live a few months ago. He will take three or four subjects, and that's what he will beat you over the head with. Gore got him off track this week and put Bush on the defensive. He's got to do that more often, because Bush will take those topics—when he ran for office in 1994, it was welfare reform, and crime and punishment—and he just harps on them.

What are Bush's current mantras?

Now it's the military and education, and he tries to stay on subject because he's very scripted. When the guy gets away from his press secretary, Karen Hughes, she issues the reply first. The next day Bush says it, repeating her. Once he steps away from his handlers, Bush is in trouble.

He makes the same kind of flubs that Reagan was so famous for. I still find it amazing that he ever graduated from Yale.

Now there's a classic example of family influence. He shouldn't have gotten into Yale. He tried to get into the University of Texas law school, but his grades were so bad that he couldn't. So his family used a little influence and he got into Harvard and got his MBA. The guy wasn't that into grades, he just liked to party and have fun.

Bush does reek of the rich party boy archetype.

Again, you've got to give credit where credit is due. When I went to Texas researching for the book, not just his friends, but people who can't stand Bush's politics and can't stand what Bush stands for said, "You've got to face the facts: He's the kind of guy you want over on a Sunday afternoon, have a couple of beers with—even though he supposedly doesn't drink,—and cook some hamburgers." In a tight group, Bush is very charismatic. He's got more Clinton in him—like the hand on the shoulder routine—than his father. Yet, when you get him in a debate, he's a total failure.

How come he can't translate that smarmy self-assurance into being more comfortable engaging other politicians?

I've always said that debates would be the difference. That's why we're having all these problems with Bush stalling on debating Gore. He



does not want to go head to head—Gore will eat his lunch.

Try sicking Lieberman on Bush. While I'm no fan of his, Lieberman is a far superior intellect to either Presidential candidate.

Oh yeah, and he'll beat Cheney up in those debates too.

Speaking of Lieberman, would you like to talk a little bit about the Bush family's anti-Semitism?

Oh sure. During the period in which I was working on the book, my publisher asked me to give them some points from the book so they could put it in the catalogue. So I did. And here I am almost done with the book, and all of the sudden St Martins' attorneys call. The Bush's have some how gotten ahold of the catalogue. The *only* thing that they screamed about was that we allege that in 1968—and Bush admits to this—that he was engaged to Katherine Wolfmann. Her stepfather was Jewish, but she wasn't. We allege in the book that the relationship was broken off because of the political influence from Bush's parents. To give you a little insight, my father-in-law lived in that area of Houston at that time, so he was one of my sources. This was the way people thought back then, especially in that area of the rich and the affluent during the late '60s. With his father running for political office, the Bush family said, "Look, you can't be marrying a girl that has a Jewish last name, this is improper," so they broke off the engagement. Publicly they say that it was a long distance relationship and it didn't work. George W was at Yale and I think she was at Rice University in Houston. They went their separate ways. We have sources that validated that. We dotted all of our Is and crossed all of our Ts. St Martin's legal department was very happy.

That's not the only time there have been anti-Semitic stories surrounding Bush, right?

A lot of readers seem to have forgotten that a couple of years ago Bush said in public that if you weren't a Christian, you weren't going to heaven. He and his mom got into an argument and called Billy Graham about it. Graham, who's a family friend, told Bush to "Back off, you're not supposed to judge." Bush got in a lot of trouble for that.

There was also that brilliant statement he was going to make to the Israeli government.

In late December of 1998, Bush and his father went to Israel. Some reporters caught him off guard and asked George W what he was going to tell Israel's leaders when he got there. Bush replied, "I'm going to tell them that they're all going straight to hell."

His tact never fails to blow me away.

The Anti-Defamation League and the Jewish Defense League jumped on it and said that while they realized it was a joke, but that it was in very poor taste.

I read some Israeli op-ed writer arguing that Lieberman was selected as Gore's VP precisely because of Bush's anti-Semitism.

It's genetic too. Bush's grandfather, Senator Prescott Bush had Nazi connections and helped finance Hitler when he was a banker. There is a family history there.

They sound like the Ford family.

Yeah, exactly. If you noticed, every time Leiberman comes under attack, Bush comes to his rescue even faster than Gore does.

Sure, because they see it as an opportunity to whitewash their own racism.

It's symptomatic of a guilty conscience.

Hence the irony of the Republican Party's attempt to appear multicultural at the Republican convention. It's not as though Bush's anti-Semitism is the source of that though, far from it. The Republican Party has always sheltered such sentiments. I think they want to draw in that segment of the non-white middle class that could potentially sympathize with them. Nonetheless, Bush's own problems makes the racist nature of his party's politics extremely rich in such a light.

Oh yeah. You didn't see any Republican Congressmen at the convention. All of the Gingrich and De Lay types were pushed to the side. What cracked me up was the number of smiling minority faces in the crowd. The cameras really zeroed in on that. One of the networks pointed out "Look at the crowd: You never see any black faces, any brown faces, just white faces." He's trying to put this happy, smiley face on his campaign. A lot of the photos and video clips on the news always show him with African-American youth, reading in a library, reading in a school. The press is giving Bush a free ride now.

Why do you think the press is being so complicit with Bush? It seems irrational for the media to be jockeying for such a rotation of power because the Democrats have managed the economy much better than the Republicans ever did. The deficit is gone, there's a huge budget surplus, the stock market is still booming. As far as '80s-style free market logic goes, they've transcended the Republicans at their own ruthless game, and they continue to get more orthodox. Why trade governing elites right now?

I totally understand. My wife and I talk about it all the time because we're news junkies. The press is bored with Clinton and Gore. They don't want Gore in there for four more years. The media wants Bush in office, otherwise things will get all mixed up. Here's the son of a president that gets elected president. It's only happened once in history with the Adamses. That's what they're going to go for. He's going to get in there. ¶ Bush is going to be like Ronald Reagan, who was out to lunch most of the time. The press is going to have lots to talk about. If Gore gets in there, it'll be the same old thing, they think. The economy will be the same. The press is all about ratings. They're trying to make things happen. They want that "If it bleeds it leads" kind of mentality. Even CNN is tabloid television. That's the way even mainstream press is these days. But trust me, once he gets elected, they would go after Bush like blood in the water with sharks because that's what they need to stimulate the news each night.

So the press is essentially looking out for its own self-interest. It's willing to sacrifice the country's well being in order remain profitable.

To be honest, I sincerely believe the American people are smart enough *not* to elect Bush as president. But if somehow he is voted into office, then it will be The Bush Presidency, Part II: The Revenge.



They don't care about the economy or anything else. They just want ratings.

That contradicts traditional leftist conceptions of the mainstream media as being a servant of the state and big business. Instead of looking out for the interests of the ruling elite, it's catering to its own needs as a particular kind of industry.

I'll tell you right now, after what I've been through over the past year, I'm *looking* for that liberal press. I have yet to find it. The press is very conservative, particularly in television.

How have liberal/left magazines like *The Nation*, *In These Times*, *Z*, and *The Progressive* treated you? Have you received any kind of support and coverage from those journals?

A little bit lately but not as much as I would think.

Let's talk about what happened to you and *Fortunate Son*. Not only is it a personal tragedy, but I think it's also a good example of how Bush might treat the press if he is elected President. Why did the book get pulled by St Martins?

The book came out in October of 1999. St Martins had printed 100,000 copies. One day before its publication, St Martins issued a press release backing up the book by saying that the book was meticulously fact-checked and scrupulously corroborated. When I was in New York, St Martins explained to me that it was fact-checked not only by the company's internal lawyers, but also by outside an outside law firm in DC as well. They do stuff for CNN and everybody else. My agent told me that if I made the allegation about Bush's drug conviction, that is what would get played up by the press, while the other 95% of the book would get downplayed. That's exactly what ended up happening, even though to this day George W Bush has to yet to deny what I said in the afterword. Bush called the book "science fiction," in reference to the *X-Files* encyclopedia I wrote, along with my biography of Patrick Stewart. Bush totally played that up as a way of damaging my credibility. Personally I think it was a natural progression to move from titles like that to writing a book about Bush.

Bush is part of popular culture too, so moving from Patrick Stewart to George W isn't really all that much of a leap.

He is. And when he loses the election, he'll be even more so. Anyway, the drug allegation generated an initial print run of a 100,000 copies. Then I got a call from the *Dallas Morning News* asking if I was the same James Hatfield involved in a conspiracy to commit murder in 1987. I initially denied it both to the *Dallas Morning News* and St Martins. But all of the sudden the story became *me*, not George W. Bush. We tried to work something out with St Martins, but they had already issued a recall of the book, which was unprecedented. They very publicly said it was furnace fodder and threatened to burn it.

So are the charges leveled against you true?

Yes. I did serve time in prison. Back in the '80s I was the vice president of a real estate company where I'd been an officer for

12 years. I got caught in a conspiracy with the president of the company and a female vice president of the firm who was black-mailing him. I got caught up in their conflict by passing on money to an inept person who tried to blow her car up. Nothing happened to her, thank god. It just blew off the grill.

The bomber screwed up?

I knew he was inept. I didn't use the guy they wanted me to. He did exactly what I was hoping he would do. But it happened, and after 15 months I was indicted because my former boss sold me out a little bit. I did five years, and then I married, wrote six or seven books and then my past came back to haunt me. The Bush campaign knew who I was months before this book came out. If I'm on parole from Texas, they damn sure knew who I was, especially with Bush being the governor of Texas. They allowed the book to come out, then discredited me by saying, "Look, this is the guy who is making allegations about drugs, look who he is." And it worked very effectively.

So what's the story with Bush's drug conviction?

We have three sources in the afterword to the book that allege that George W was arrested in 1972 for cocaine possession. His father, who was UN Ambassador at the time, pulled some strings with a judge in Texas to get George W into Project Pull, which was an inner city African-American mentoring project. The sources we used were anonymous and we took a real beating for that in the mainstream press. These were sources that I used throughout the book. I always corroborated everything they said with secondary and third sources. Nonetheless, there's nothing in this book that's ever been disproved. If it was such a threat to Bush, his campaign would have sued us. To this day, we've never heard from them.

To finish up, knowing what you do about Bush's policies, his background and his track record as governor, what do you think would happen if he and Cheney were elected?

To be honest, I sincerely believe the American people are smart enough *not* to elect Bush as president. But if somehow he is voted into office, then it will be the Bush Presidency, Part II: The Revenge. Although the younger Bush has always stated that he would "be his own man" and not surround himself with leftovers from his father's one-term administration—"I'm not interested in the people who lost my dad's election"—he has repeatedly used many of the elder Bush's former advisers in his campaign. A classic example is his choice for a running mate. Although Bush promised he would pick someone who was "inclusive," "electrifying," "compassionate," and a "different kind of Republican," he chose Dick Cheney, his father's former defense secretary and an extreme right-wing Republican. If Bush is elected, he will take more naps than Ronald Reagan did when he was in office and we will have more Iran-Contra-type of scandals occurring because presidential aides and advisers will essentially be running the country. No doubt, the conservative inmates will be running the asylum. I'm sure Oliver North will be calling for a job in the White House again if the son-of-Bush is elected. ©

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Kill Rock Stars

Prank Records

Initial Records

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Kolazhnikov

Caulfield Records

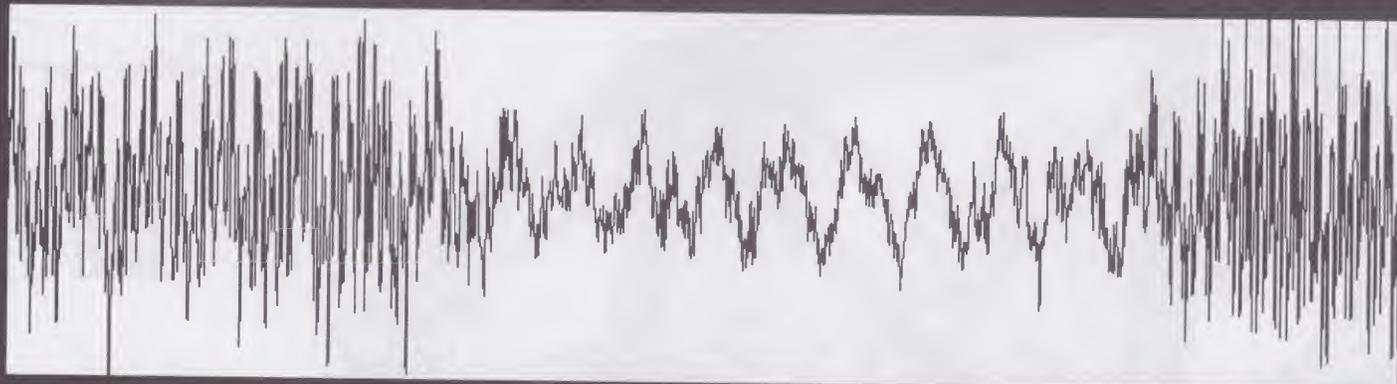
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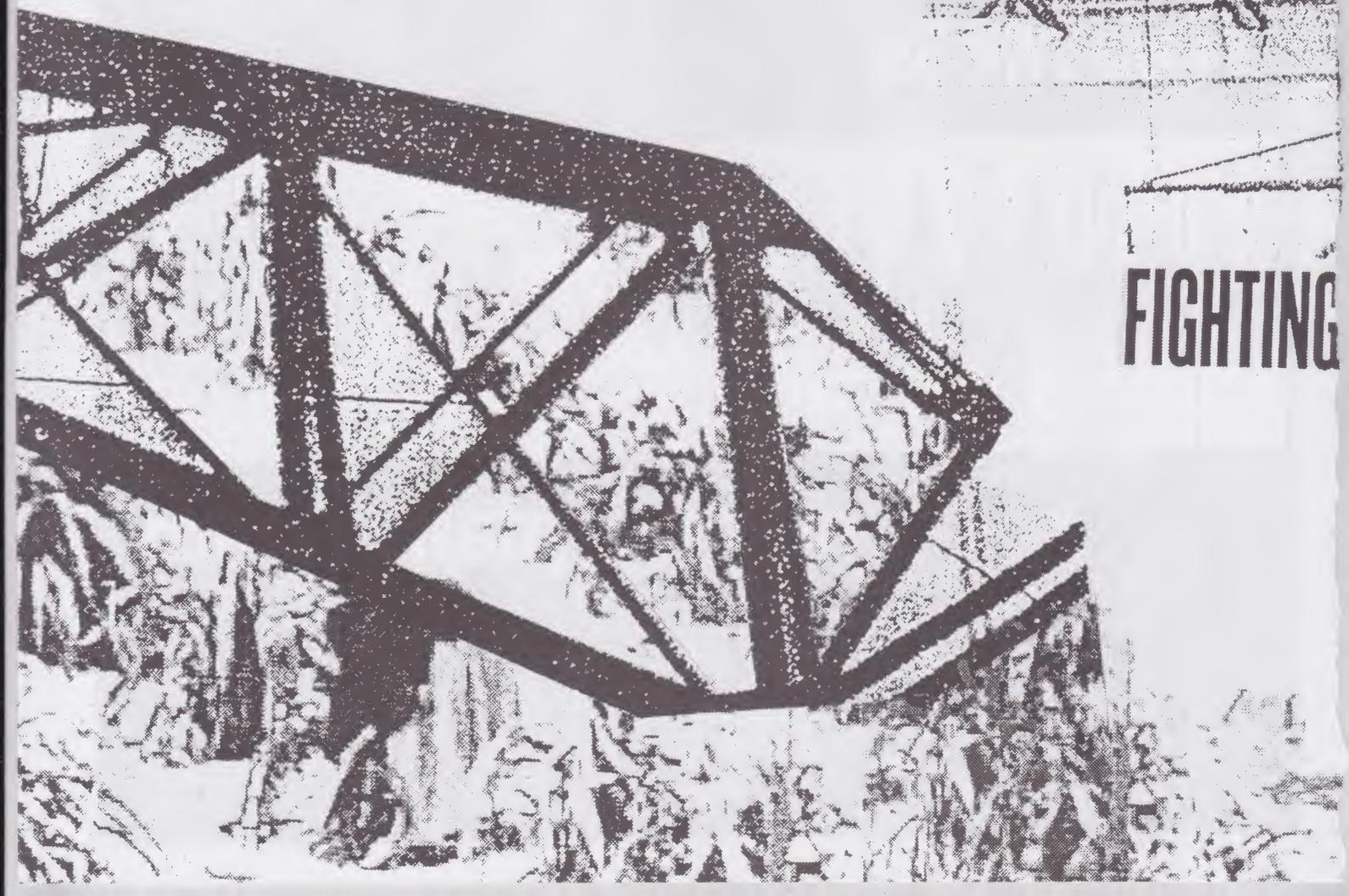
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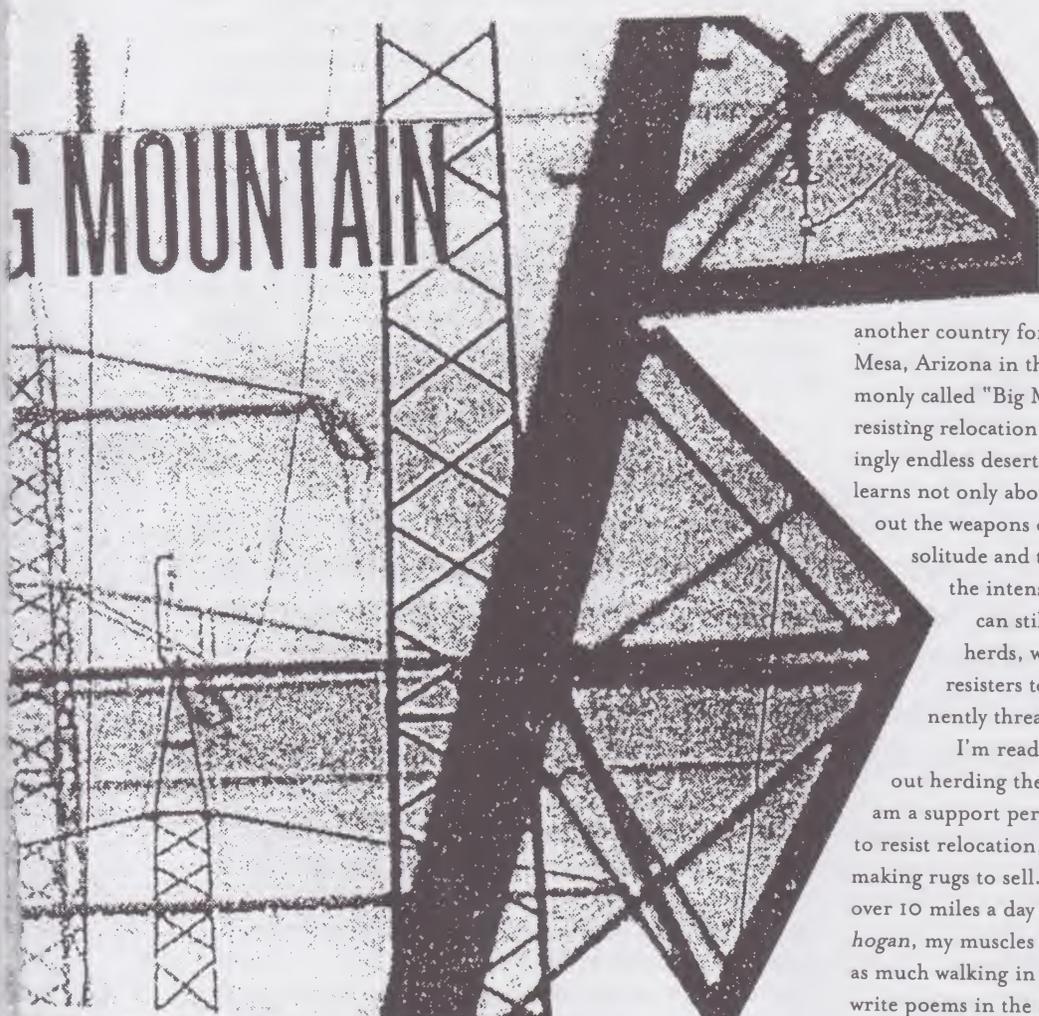


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FIRE FROM BI

FIGHTING





Big MOUNTAIN

GENOCIDE AT BLACK MESA

by Sera Bilezikyan

"They made us many promises, more than I can remember, but they never kept but one: they promised to take our land, and they took it."
—Red Cloud

I'm miles from a paved road or a telephone; at times even another soul who speaks English. The sun is hot and the work-days long. There is intense surveillance and harassment by the authorities. I'm in the middle of a fierce resistance and an ancient indigenous culture. And I'm not in Chiapas. I'm not even in

another country for that matter, but deep in the desert of Black Mesa, Arizona in the Navajo Nation, a sacred yet tense area commonly called "Big Mountain," as a supporter to the community resisting relocation. Among the pristine deep canyons and seemingly endless deserts of sage, wildflowers and brilliant sunsets, one learns not only about the culture but also to trust nature throughout the weapons of the desert, the sun, heat, harsh winters and solitude and to tell the time by the sky and trust the future by the intense calm. There is a place in America where you can still find a community living traditionally as shepherds, weavers and farmers; and most recently, as resisters to the corporate greed and racism which imminently threatens to destroy their lives and their culture.

I'm reading *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* while out herding the sheep, which I am tending so that the family I am a support person to has more time to do whatever they can to resist relocation, from fighting legal battles to growing food to making rugs to sell. The sheep and I walk together sometimes over 10 miles a day and while at the end of the day in my cozy *hogan*, my muscles are aching, I am not as tired as if I were doing as much walking in the city. The dry air feels good on my lungs. I write poems in the sand.

Laying there, I listen to the crackle of the radio. I am less than three hours away from Flagstaff, yet on my AM/FM battery-operated radio I can get just three fuzzy stations: The Navajo Nation network (in Diné), a Christian Lite Rock and Propaganda station, and one devoted completely to auctioning off used trucks. I choose the Navajo station. The rolling sounds of the Diné language is the only thing that makes me feel a bit less lonely when my mind has finished wandering for the day. On the radio, I pick out a few words I can recognize. When there is no word, or concept, in the Diné language for something, they throw in an accented English one. In Diné, there is no word for "government." Instead, they say *Washington*. It is telling that to the Diné the two things are one and the same.

In 1863, the United States Government dispatched Kit Carson to subdue the Navajo, whose lifestyle of shepherding and

farming stood in the way of white settlement. He engaged in a "scorched-earth" policy of killing livestock and destroying homes. Eventually over 8,500 Navajos were captured and forced to march 300 miles to Fort Sumner, New Mexico, the first "reservation" in America, where many of the Navajo died. Those that survived lived in deplorable conditions. Eventually they were allowed to return to "freedom" in the form of a larger reservation centered around the Big Mountain area only to now face the largest forced relocation of any racial group since the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II.

In 1974, the Navajo-Hopi Land Settlement Act was passed, masterminded by Arizona Republicans such as Barry Goldwater and authored by 2000 Republican Presidential wannabe and self-described "reformer," John McCain. Claiming it would finally settle a long-standing "land dispute" between the Diné and the Hopi tribes, it called for the relocation of over 10,000 Diné but

I went to Black Mesa for several weeks fresh from the protests in April against the IMF and the World Bank in Washington, DC, a pepper-spray flavored jamboree protesting just what DC, to me, has always stood for: corporate power, political deceit, and poverty. Arizona was a welcome change from the overt displays of wealth and discrepancy that abound in DC, as well as from the surveillance and intensity surrounding the mass demonstrations. I also found striking similarities between the situation at Black Mesa and with many threatened indigenous cultures around the world engaged in low-intensity warfare of various kinds, often victims of global capitalism and neoliberalism.

One thing that struck me right away—aside from the blinding scenery and the concept that roads were simply where the truck you were riding in chose to drive that day—was the contrast at Black Mesa between being both removed from and deeply centered within corporate capitalist society. Of course there were no



ONE THING THAT STRUCK ME RIGHT AWAY—ASIDE FROM THE BLINDING SCENERY AND THE CONCEPT THAT ROADS WERE SIMPLY WHERE THE TRUCK YOU WERE RIDING IN CHOSE TO DRIVE THAT DAY—WAS THE CONTRAST AT BLACK MESA BETWEEN BEING BOTH REMOVED FROM AND DEEPLY CENTERED WITHIN CORPORATE CAPITALIST SOCIETY. OF COURSE THERE WERE NO STARBUCKS OR SUVs ON EVERY CORNER, YET THE ENTIRE DINÉ CULTURE, DESPITE ITS EXISTENCE OUTSIDE OF SUCH GOODS, IS BEING SWALLOWED BY THEM AT THE SAME TIME.

less than 100 Hopi. However, the land dispute the act purported to settle was one that the government created in the first place. Because of a long history of the United States forcing the Diné to agree to land cessions and replacement lands further west, the Diné and Hopi nations ultimately ended up living as close neighbors on the same land. Yet the two tribes learned to coexist and lived in close proximity peacefully for generations, even trading crops and goods. But in the 1950s, Washington-style tribal governments, completely alien to Native American communities were implemented by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) into both tribes. Stoked by outside forces like the BIA and coal interests, a fierce animosity between the two tribes sparked. Pretty soon a real "land dispute" was at hand.

In order to "settle" this dispute, the Land Settlement Act required that the former 'Joint Use Area' of 1.8 million acres be divided in half into Navajo Partition Land and Hopi Partition Land. The act also put a "construction freeze" on the disputed area, not allowing the Diné to work on their homes unless the cost was less than \$25, even in the extreme winter cold. The act also called for reducing and revoking livestock permits. In the rush to pass the act, there was no thought put to where the thousands of displaced Diné people would go. When land was finally purchased six years later, it was just downstream from a 1979 radioactive spill.

Starbucks or SUVs on every corner, yet the entire Diné culture, despite its existence outside of such goods, is being swallowed by them at the same time. It is hardly coincidence that the "land dispute" is over land that happens to sit on top of the largest unstripped coal deposit left in the country. There is no doubt that if the Diné were to be removed, the entire area would be strip-mined and such sacred and ancient sites such as Big Mountain would be destroyed. We would see the end of traditional Diné culture as it miraculously manages to thrive today. But the damage has already begun.

In 1967, Corporate interests furthered by politicians led the Peabody Coal Company, a multimillion dollar corporation and one of the largest coal companies in the world, to establish a mine at Black Mesa. Royalties were promised to the Hopi tribe, who granted their approval of the project, albeit not without a certain amount of coercion by the BIA.

The Diné say the coal mine is already ruining the natural ecosystem and serenity of the desert. A coal slurry pipeline which powers cities as far away as Las Vegas uses three million gallons of water *per day*, while the Diné have to haul water from as far away as 20 miles and have no electricity. The coal mine also pollutes the air and the groundwater and has caused illness among both livestock and people.

While shearing the sheep with hand clippers (and blisters), one man tells me about how the sheep seem different now than they did just several years back. We communicate in broken Spanish, which he knows a little of from a few years working with Mexican laborers. He knows no English and the only words I can seem to remember in Diné are the most urgent: sheep (*dibé*), beautiful (*nijoni*), and a few others. He says the insides of the sheep seem more fragile after they are killed during a ceremony than they did years back. Eating them has also made some people sick. He later drives me by the Peabody Coalmine, a huge, looming structure which livestock roam dangerously close. You can see the mine's lights from miles away—they interrupt the stars.

I am invited to a rain prayer. Nervous, all I can think about is the dry land, the dry air, the illuminating skyline of Las Vegas I saw and barely gave a second thought to just several months before. I was feeling that *alone with nothing but yourself* feeling you discover the first time you go to jail, but with none of the claustrophobia and all of the desire to be free. My eyes were too dry to even think about tears. I got that feeling a number of times during my stay at Big Mountain.

I am taken to several more of these sacred sites. One has ancient etchings on the walls, images of people with strong spirits. Another site is a beautiful natural spring—it makes you wonder how the sweetest, coldest water you ever could imagine is trickling into your hands from the heart of the desert. It is sites like these, sites that can never be replaced—or relocated—that keep the Diné people fighting.

But time is running out. In 1996, Senator McCain drafted an "Accommodation Agreement," which offered benefits to the Diné for relocation or an option to remain on the land for up to 75 years—but with drastically reduced livestock grazing rights, less land, no chance to pass on land and livestock to families, and subservience to the Hopi tribal government, including needing permission for burials and traditional ceremonies. McCain gave the Diné people two choices: sign the agreement or be forcibly evicted from the land in four years.

There are currently several hundred Diné who refuse to sign the Accommodation Agreement and are determined in their resistance to relocation. The resisters, as well as supporters like me who go to Black Mesa to help out with sheepherding and other duties, are subject to constant harassment and intimidation by the Bureau of Indian Affairs police, often in the form of livestock impoundments. This is a particularly devastating form of intimidation because sheep and goats are the livelihood of the Diné people. They have traditionally used for food, weaving and in religious ceremonies.

Relocation is genocide to the Diné people. The religion and spirituality of the Diné is site-specific. It cannot be practiced at another location. The Diné feel a strong tie to the land and sacred sites where they and their ancestors were born, where their

medicinal herbs and crops grow and animals graze. Those Diné who relocate end up living in an area called the "New Lands" designated by the government, which is located downstream from one of the worst radioactive spills in the country, 1979's dam leak at Church Rock, New Mexico.

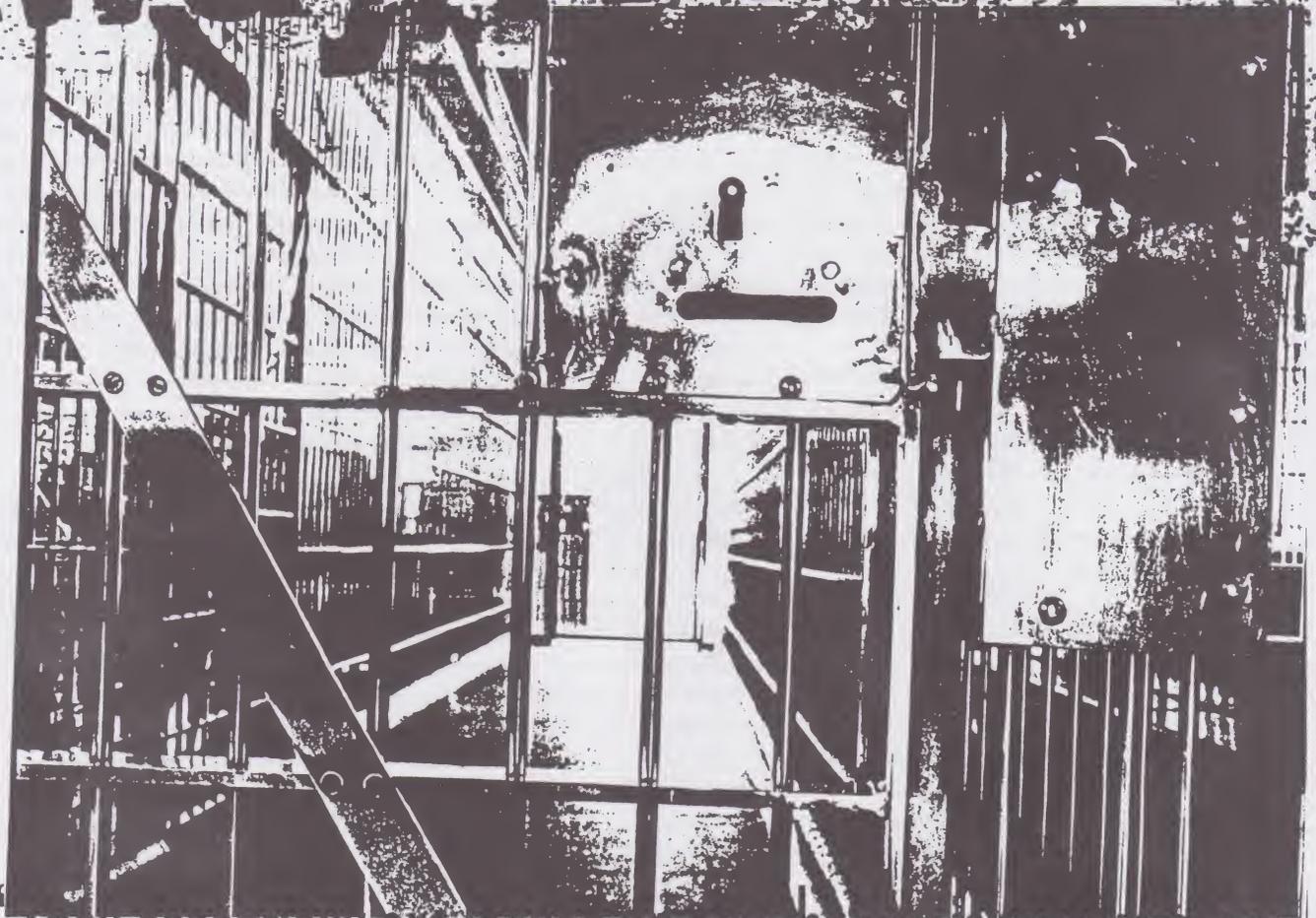
The Diné people do not speak English for the most part and are not used to village life. It is an incredibly difficult adjustment from an almost self-sufficient lifestyle to one of paying taxes and bills, and the distraction of Americanized city life. Many fall into homelessness, alcoholism and premature death. As one 64-year old woman relocatee puts it, "It is like being buried alive."

February 2, 2000 was the deadline for all evictions to take place at Black Mesa yet a number of legal technicalities, appeals, and a large support presence has given the resisting families a bit more time. The Diné have looked to the United Nations and other human and indigenous rights groups for help; in fact, the situation was the target of the first UN investigation on human rights violations on US soil in the country's history. The situation at Black Mesa has been considered genocide by many international working groups. The relocation policy is also completely illegal, as the Diné constitute a sovereign nation. The United States promised it would uphold the rights of its citizens when the territory was ceded from Mexico in the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1848.

The public has been kept in the dark about what is really going on at Black Mesa. While a few hundred Diné have been actively resisting relocation, the number of Diné actually effected exceeds 13,000 and the real cost of relocation, whether voluntarily or forcibly, will exceed \$1.5 billion. The "land dispute" and conflict between the two tribes was fabricated in the interest of corporate greed. The sacred lands and lifestyle of the Hopi are also being destroyed and the royalties they are receiving are nowhere near the amount being generated. The relocation policy and strip-mining of the pristine area are prime examples of racism, environmental pillage, and indisputable genocide. Allowing the lies, deceit and the murder of a people to continue is something I refuse to do, even now that I'm no longer on Diné land.

Although it has been a few months since I left, in my mind I am still in the desert. The tranquility and truth it taught a city girl like me is something I plan to carry with me forever. It is an incredible experience, to be touched by the strong spirits of a unique culture, and in your own backyard. Experiencing moonlight you can read by and stars you can't count. Holding newborn goat twins in your arms just hours after they are born. Hearing the sounds of drums while knowing there is not a soul within 20 miles. Seeing graffiti worthy of large Central American cities on every water tower and windmill, like arrows screaming towards a deserving future. The words of Diné elder Pauline Whitesinger continually echo through my head: "There is no word in the Diné language for relocation. To relocate is to disappear forever and never to be seen again." ©

AWAY FROM THE



They essentially are locked up and the key is thrown away

Families and Lawyers in Illinois Demand Rights for C Number Prisoners Who Are "Buried Alive"

NEWS

By Kari Lydersen

They are buried alive."

That's how lawyer Michael Deutsch described the loved ones of the people who packed a room in Chicago's Daley Center for a hearing before a government prison reform committee in early August.

Deutsch was referring to the about 460 "C number" prisoners in Illinois, prisoners given long sentences before 1978 who, because of legislative changes, are now "trapped in the system."

People like the inmate who was recently diagnosed with terminal stomach cancer, yet is still being imprisoned while those with much lesser charges are paroled.

The man's partner tearfully described how he has gone before a parole board year after year, only to be told each time that his parole is denied, for no explained reason. Now, racked with pain and with only a few months to live, he is still locked up because of the "seriousness" of the offense he committed well over 20 years ago.

Or the brother of Carolyn Harris, who was sentenced for a murder 21 years ago at age 17 and remains in prison indefinitely today, even while those with equivalent charges go in and out.

"He was labeled a gang-banger in prison because he was trying to help the younger prisoners and convince them to get an education," Harris told the committee, noting that her brother maintains his innocence and that no physical evidence links him to the crime. "He has more education now than most people walking out here on the street."

Prisoners sentenced in Illinois before 1978 were sentenced under the assumption that they would go before a parole board regularly, and if they were judged to be rehabilitated and no longer a threat, they would be paroled even if they had years left on their sentence.

In 1978, then-Governor James Thompson signed a new crime bill that basically abolished the concept of parole and the Parole and Pardon Board. It created determinate sentencing, which set fixed release dates for prisoners with little emphasis placed on their behavior in prison.

Initially, the bill also included fixed release dates for prisoners sentenced before 1978. But during the final debate on the legislation, a provision was added to deny fixed release dates to prisoners with sentences of 20 years or more from before 1978.

So these prisoners are held in limbo, serving sentences much longer than they would have gotten under today's determinate sentencing laws, yet denied the former parole system that would likely have released most of them already. These prisoners still have yearly parole hearings, but now they are heard by the Prisoner Review Board, a highly paid 12-member group appointed by the governor, under a system in which only a tiny fraction of those who previously would have been paroled are released.

Prisoners sentenced today in the state under determinate sentencing get a designated sentence. They know they will be released at the end of that sentence and can earn one day off for each day of good behavior they log in prison. That means a prisoner with a 30 year sentence can get off in 15 years. Supervised parole for prisoners sentenced today does not exceed three years, no matter what the crime. Those sentenced under the old law can spend the rest of their lives on parole.

But Illinois' C number prisoners "have no idea when or if they will ever be released," according to a report presented to the House of Representatives Prison Reform Management Committee at the August 1 hearing.

"They essentially are locked up and the key is thrown away," Deutsch, who works with the People's Law Office, told the committee.

A Catch 22

The committee, made up of state representatives heard the testimony of paroled C number prisoners and family members of C numbers who are still incarcerated. "It's clear in hindsight that with the dismantling of the Parole and Pardon Board came the end of the chance of parole for the 460 men and women still in the system sentenced under the old law," says the report.

"These prisoners are caught in a Catch 22," says Ra Chaka, a former C number prisoner who was released after 33 years behind bars and now runs the Prison Action Committee advocacy organization. "There used to be programs in prisons to prepare prisoners for parole and to allow them to show the parole board what they were doing with their life. But now there are no more programs, and they still have to meet with the board."

Between 1978 and 1983, 28 to 75 percent of prisoners appearing before the Board were paroled. But due to changes in the process enacted in 1984, now only one to four percent are paroled. Meanwhile, all the prisoners are getting older—they have all been in prison for at least 22 years—and a large percent of them are in ill health.

"Most of these prisoners are between 41 and 60 years old," says Rep. Delgado, who represents Chicago's Humboldt Park area. "That is the most economically productive time of a person's life, the time when it is most important for them to be with their families. These people aren't a danger to society. Last week we had four shootings in our community, and not one of the shooters was over 25 years old. It's time for these 'old people' to rejoin us. Enough is enough."

Arbitrary Parole Decisions

The major change in the 1984 parole process which caused the drastic reduction in paroles was the institution of an "En Banc" process, in which only one member of the board interviews the prisoner. That person then reports to the board and a majority of the board must vote for the prisoner's parole. In the past, three members would interview the prisoner and two of them had to ask for parole.

"Now the people making the decision do not have the opportunity to meet with the inmate and look them in the eye," says Loch Bowman, a lawyer with the MacArthur Justice Center. "I am not aware of any other situation where I am advocating for a person and I don't get a chance to meet face to face with the decision-maker. It's fundamentally not fair."

Lawyers representing the prisoners are asking that set guidelines be instituted for the parole evaluation of C numbers, for example an objective "matrix" system that assigns point values for a prisoner's behavior or improvement in various areas.

"We need criteria that looks at what someone's done in prison and what they will do when they get out," says Deutsch. "But under the system we have now, it doesn't matter what someone does in prison. I know a prisoner who works for a civilian employer in prison who calls him the best worker he's ever had. This man has family and church support when he comes out, and he hasn't had a ticket in 30 years. Yet he is still denied parole. This creates a situation of anger and hopelessness in prison, and that makes it a much more dangerous place."

Endless Parole

Ron Wolf, a former C number prisoner, did have the good fortune to be paroled three years ago. But even on parole, he often feels as if he is in prison. Wolf, 66, served a 20-year sentence for armed robbery and home invasion—he was never charged with murder or causing bodily harm. His parole doesn't end until the year 2070.

Wolf works as a driver for the Salvation Army and does additional work for Chevrolet delivering cars. He also does public speaking for Christian groups. But these positive activities are hampered on a constant basis by parole regulations that prevent him from leaving the state.

"Part of my duties at Chevrolet are to go to Indiana, Iowa, Wisconsin and Michigan to pick up cars," he says. "One time I was supposed to go to Hammond, Indiana, 45 minutes away from the city, to pick up a car. But the parole board wouldn't let me." The parole board even forbid him from doing a scheduled Bible studies speaking tour in Southern Illinois.

"They've got my hands tied," he says.

Alonzo Jones was just paroled this year after 37 years behind bars. Jones was sent to Menard penitentiary in 1963 for a burglary conviction. At the prison, he was caught up in a riot that resulted in the death of several guards. He was charged with murder, though he maintains his innocence. He was sentenced to death, then resented to 150 years in prison when the Death Penalty was ruled unconstitutional in 1974. Guards took mental and physical retribution on Jones constantly after the riot.

"I lost all my teeth, I had my nose broken, I had I don't know how many broken bones," says Jones. "I got a severe butt-whipping at least every month. And I could only leave my cell once every two weeks for a shower." Jones went on a 54-day hunger strike to protest the abuse and conditions, leading to him being hospitalized and placed on IV fluids.

Jones noted that while in prison, he got a college degree and certificates in "every vocational skill you can imagine." He was given only one disciplinary ticket in 24 years of incarceration.

"I proved over and over that I had rehabilitated myself," he says. "All the parole officers who met me personally voted to parole me, but the ones who hadn't met me denied it. Each time it was denied based on 'the seriousness of the offense.' It makes us very discouraged. What do we have to do to get parole?"

Demands

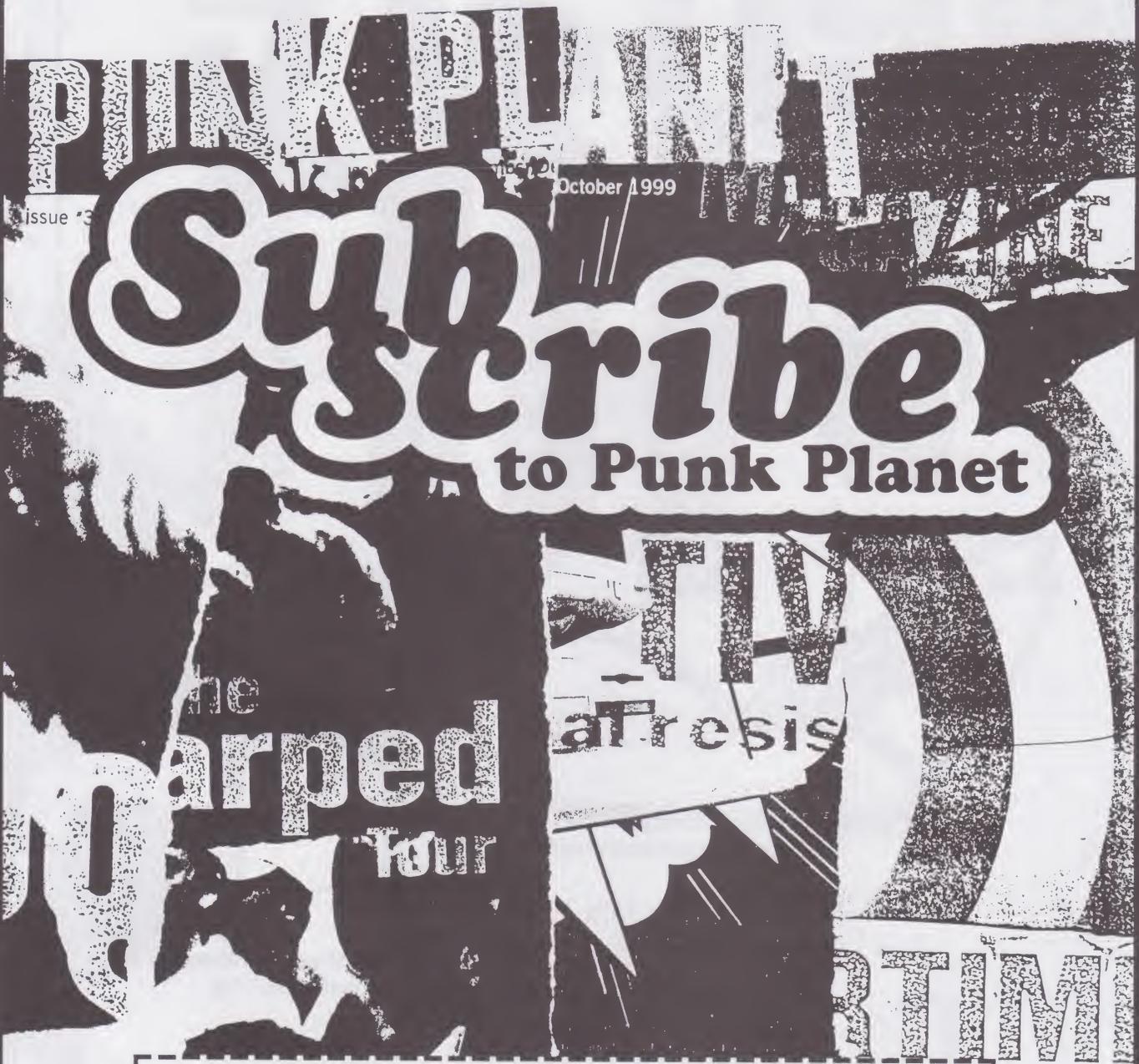
Lawyers and advocates for the C numbers are asking the committee for several key changes. In addition to the use of a matrix to determine parole eligibility, they want the reinstatement of a three-person parole board that needs a majority to grant parole.

They are also asking that prisoners are guaranteed a parole hearing every year: now, the board can delay the next hearing for three or four years. And they are demanding that C numbers who are released get only three years of parole, like prisoners sentenced today. They want a mercy law allowing terminally ill prisoners to die at home with family, and they want a citizen oversight committee to monitor the parole procedures.

Harris noted that not only the inmates but their families suffer from the years of getting their hopes up and then being disappointed by an arbitrary system. Her brother "has been going before the board every year, and each time he's denied because of the seriousness of the crime," she says. "But I see inmates going in for the same crimes today and coming out in seven or 11 years. Meanwhile the C numbers are still incarcerated and they've thrown the key away." ©



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welfare reform

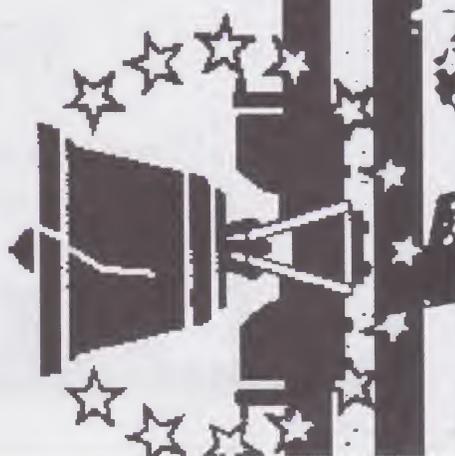


FOUR YEARS AFTER WELFARE "REFORM" ONE THING IS CLEAR: IT DOESN'T WORK

Four years ago, President Clinton fulfilled his campaign pledge to "end welfare as we know it," signing into law the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996—also known as welfare "reform." It mandated lifetime limits on receiving public assistance (which many will hit next year) and ended decades of public entitlement for America's poor.

At the signing of the act, Clinton proudly cited the words of Robert Kennedy from nearly 30 years before: "Work is the meaning of what this country is all about. We need it as individuals. We need to sense it in our fellow citizens. And we need it as a society and as a people." More than anything, America's recent venture into welfare reform has been characterized by a deep and unwavering conviction in the power of work to cure all our social ills.

by Tracie McMillan



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While welfare recipients have headed for the job market in droves, the question of efficacy remains: has welfare reform worked so far? Has it, as Clinton predicted, ended "the terrible, almost physical isolation of poor people and their children from the rest of mainstream America?" Even the *New York Times*, hardly a journal a radical thought, ran a cover story in late 1999 somberly declaring that welfare reform's "Bold Effort Leaves Much Unchanged for the Poor." There are important lessons to be learned from our nation's recent foray into workfare, touching on themes of poverty, economic priorities, and, not least of all, work.

Lesson One: Less Welfare Means More Problems

Politicians—from Democratic Presidential hopeful Al Gore to New York City's Republican Mayor Rudolph Giuliani—have touted the success of welfare reform, citing dramatic drops in caseload. Nationally, the welfare caseload dropped from 5.1 million cases in 1994 to 2.7 million in 1999 according to a report from the Congressional Research Service. New York City, responsible for a sizeable chunk of the nation's welfare rolls, went from assisting 1.1 million people through welfare in 1995 to 675,000 people in 1998; by May 2000 it was down to just under 577,000, a level unseen since the 1960s. But the numbers don't tell the real truth.

"All that means is that fewer people are getting support from the government, it doesn't mean that fewer people are poor," says Andrew Friedman, co-director of Make the Road by Walking, a community activist organization in Bushwick, Brooklyn. MTRBW works in several areas, including economic justice and helping non-English speaking women on public assistance. "It doesn't make any sense for them to measure their success by the drop in caseload. The way they should measure it is by asking 'Do people have better health care? Are children eating? Are more people actually working?'"

In large part the answers to those questions paint a very different picture. Apart from the drop in welfare rolls, there is little that indicates that America has begun to effectively address poverty. For starters, fewer *poor* people are receiving government assistance. This doesn't mean that poverty has gone down, but rather—as Friedman hints—that the government is simply doing less for them. Hunger and homelessness have risen over the last few years, as has the severity of poverty. Fewer low income families take advantage of Medicaid. Waiting lists for publicly-subsidized child care—a vital necessity for those leaving welfare for work—are sky-high. In 1997, *means-tested* programs (such as food stamps, welfare, and Medicaid) removed 700,000 fewer children from poverty in the US than they did in 1996. In New York City, 58.2% of poor families received public assistance in 1985. By 1998, it had dropped to 42.3%.

Though the poverty rate has dropped slightly, moving from 13.7% in 1996 to 12.7% in 1998, the depth of poverty has increased. The child poverty gap *after* means-tested benefits (a measurement of the total amount by which the incomes of poor children fall below the poverty line after receiving welfare), declined from \$20.6 billion in 1993 to \$18.4 billion in 1995.

Following welfare reform, it rose to \$19.4 billion in 1997, an increase of 6%, despite rapid economic growth.

Requests for emergency food assistance have risen across the country. A 1999 national survey found that 80% of food providers cited an increase in demand from families with children; the average increase was 15%. In New York City, 75% of emergency food providers in 1999 reported that they had more people coming for food who had had their public assistance cases closed. At the same time, it is estimated that about 1/5 of the demand for emergency food went unmet in 1999.

The number of low-income parents enrolled in Medicaid in 15 states declined by almost one million—approximately 27%—between January 1996 and December 1999 according to a study by Families USA, a nonprofit consumer group. Though the federal law mandated transitional Medicaid for those kicked off of welfare, few states have followed that protocol.

At the same time, affordable day care is close to non-existent. New York City, responsible for a sizeable portion of the national welfare caseload, had 952 vacancies in either group or family day care centers in October, 1999. The number of children on waiting lists, however, was 18,517—well over 19 times as many openings. These numbers only represent those children in formal, licensed care. In 1998, 83% of children receiving publicly funded day care from NYC's Office of Employment Services (which overwhelmingly services welfare recipients families) were in informal, unlicensed care—providing mothers with a weekly subsidy of \$76. For a five-day work week, that comes to just over \$15 a day to pay a relative, friend, or neighbor to take care of a child.

Even housing proves a difficult luxury to secure; a report on the consequences of welfare reform in New York State found that fully 1 in 4 welfare recipients had lived in a homeless shelter at some point between 1993 and 1997. In New York City, 89% of providers reported an increase in their homeless populations since 1995, when workfare took effect; 73% of homeless service providers reported that their clients were having trouble complying with workfare or work rules in 1999.

A national survey of 26 cities conducted by the US Conference of Mayors found that nearly 70% of homeless service providers registered an increase in need for families from 1998 to 1999, with an average increase in need of 17%. Ninety-two percent of city officials expect the need for emergency shelter for families to continue to increase.

Such increases may not seem like much—perhaps just a statistical blip. But when set against the backdrop of a booming economy that's produced 2.5 million millionaires, 267 billionaires, and soaring stock options, an increase homelessness, hunger, and the depth of child poverty are an indication that the benefits of the "new economy" have yet to "trickle down" to those on the lowest rungs of the economic ladder.

Lesson Two: "It's work that sets you free."

In New York City "workfare" was implemented in 1995, before it was a national mandate, at the behest of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani. Giuliani quickly appointed Jason Turner—who gained

fame for revamping Wisconsin's welfare program—as the head of the city's welfare agency. Turner's novel approach? Poverty isn't a problem. Welfare is.

"It is not the relative level of income that is a prime social determinant, but rather the source of income," he wrote in an online forum for the *Atlantic Monthly*. "Idleness [is] responsible for much (though not all) of the decay in the social and family fabric." In 1998, during an interview on public television in New York, Turner blithely stated that "It's work that sets you free"—an eerie restatement of the phrase written over the gateways to Nazi concentration camps.

Despite the apparent conviction of the political mainstream that work will solve our nation's problems, not everyone is convinced that people are leaving welfare for work. Advocates like Friedman who work with welfare recipients point to a more specific cause for the drop: sanctions.

"Sanction" is the term used to denote a punitive denial or reduction of public assistance benefits, generally applied when a recipient fails to comply with one or more of the myriad rules and regulations governing public assistance. In New York City, there were just over 220,000 public assistance cases obligated to work in April 1999; about 45,000 (over 20%) were in sanction. Not only are sanction rates high, fewer people are even getting public assistance in the first place. In 1993, before the implementation of workfare, 26.5% of applications for public assistance in New York City were rejected. By 1999, that proportion nearly doubled to a whopping 51.7%.

For New York's part, most applicants who appeal such denials win their case against the city. Since the implementation of welfare reform in New York, the percent of appeal hearings ruling in favor of welfare recipients has steadily remained well above 80%, sometimes hovering above 90%. A study of a welfare center in New York's Washington Heights neighborhood, financed by the United Way, found that of 174 families who reported having problems with their welfare benefits, 93% were either wrongly denied benefits upon application or lost their benefits wrongly.

"Instead of one or two appointments to do the [public assistance] application, you have an endless series of hoops that people have to jump through. Eventually, something happens where they can't jump through one of the hoops," explains Friedman.

on the welfare budget. Conservatives decry big government and wasteful bureaucracy, but don't bat an eye at the immense administrative support and the correspondingly hefty price tag required for the increased screening of recipients. City records show that New York City has mildly increased its overall spending on welfare in the last few decades, rising from just over \$7 billion in 1970 to almost \$7.6 billion in 1999 (all in 1999 dollars). The amount spent on grants—typically a sizeable chunk of spending—has dropped a drastic 55%; where the city spent about half of its welfare budget on recipients in 1970 (\$3.5 billion), it now spends only one-fifth (\$1.5 billion), using the other 80% to cover its bulging administrative costs. Government provision may have shrunk, but the bureaucracy is booming.

In the face of all this, a look at the face of the poor shows us that they are overwhelmingly non-white and female. In 1995, the poverty rate for white Americans stood at 11.2%; among blacks it was 29.3%, and among Hispanics it was 30.3%. In New York City, the difference was even more pronounced. In 1995, the poverty rate for whites was below the national average at 10.6%. Blacks and Hispanics were poor at a rate over 3 times that of whites, 35.5% and 42.4%, respectively.

The rates for welfare reflect a similar racial disparity, as well as a gendered one. Nearly 42% of welfare recipients were white, non-Hispanic in 1997; nonwhite, non-Hispanic counted for just under 37%, while Hispanic came in at 22%. An incredible 96.4% of welfare recipients were female. Centuries of discrimination, institutionalized in our society's structures, have ensured that the face of welfare, like that of poverty, is overwhelmingly brown and female in America.

Lesson Three: Work, Work, Work.....and still poor

Most people on welfare will tell you they want to work. The reasons they don't can range from having a disabled child they need to take care of to not being able to afford child care to not being able to find a job. Welfare reform presupposed an immense job market, ready to take on scores of low-skill, undereducated workers. It's little surprise that few of those on welfare have actually made it into full-time jobs with benefits.

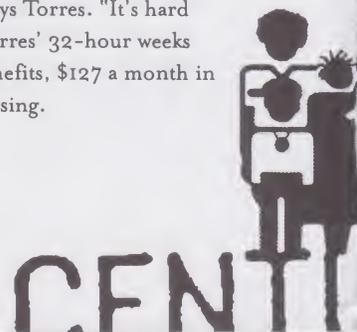
Norma Torres has been a participant in New York City's Work Experience Program since 1997, working in maintenance and janitorial services at several city buildings in the Bronx. "I'm looking

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"That's why people aren't getting government support. It has nothing to do with people working or not working."

The immense paper trail that it takes to verify eligibility for public assistance, ranging from numerous home visits by caseworkers to a computerized finger-imaging program, takes its toll

for a job and everything. I take my newspaper, put applications here, put applications there. And nothing" says Torres. "It's hard for me." An unmarried, childless woman, Torres' 32-hour weeks bring her just over \$200 a month in cash benefits, \$127 a month in food stamps, and eligibility for Section 8 housing.



"I only ask for a job that can pay maybe \$6, \$7 an hour. That's all I ask," sighs Torres. "Good benefits and everything. That's all I'm asking for."

Torres' willingness to work for a wage that, particularly in New York City, will barely cover the cost of living, is part and parcel of the welfare system. A "side effect" of welfare reform has been the creation of a sizeable labor supply desperate for work—any work at all. Welfare doesn't mandate secure employment at decent wages with benefits, it simply requires that recipients have a job, whether it's sweeping courthouse floors or picking up trash with a city workfare team.

"The goal," says Friedman, "is to coerce poor women, mostly women of color, into the labor market and they're forced to accept exploitative working conditions at low pay." With reams of desperate recipients job hunting, it makes the situation even more tenuous for low-skill workers who know that there are dozens out there trying to get into paid employment. Accepting wage concessions and more hazardous work conditions is hard to avoid.

Some draw a direct connection between workfare and the drop in some employment sectors: "The WEP [part of NYC's workfare program] program has led to significant reductions in full-time city jobs represented by DC 37 and other unions. [WEP has] failed to lead to permanent, full-time, nonsubsidized employment," says Lee Saunders of District Council 37, the city employees' union. The Bronx Housing Court, for instance, boasted a staff of over 70 in late 1999; just six were actual city employees. The rest were all WEP workers.

Desperate for jobs or not, statistics show that it's a tough squeeze to get welfare recipients into any kind of job at all. When the welfare act was signed in 1996, labor market analysts in New York raised their eyebrows at the new work requirements. Between 1992 and 1996, there was a net gain of 88,000 jobs in the city. At that rate of growth, even if every single new job went to a welfare recipient, it would have taken 21 years for all of them to be absorbed into the economy.

"With a growing economy, I suppose eventually you'd be able to do it," William Grinker, a former welfare official in New York, said when the federal bill was signed. "But in the short term it logically leads you to understand that a massive job creation effort beyond anything the government's done since the Great Depression would have to go on to provide work for all those people."

Public job creation, however, hasn't made it to the top of any candidate's priority list. Indeed, in New York City, public sector employment—long the center of a strong, materially stable working class—showed the second largest decline of any industry, losing nearly 24,000 jobs from 1992 to 1998.

Private sector job growth has risen with the recent economic expansion, surpassing the modest growth of the early '90s, but it has been concentrated mainly in two areas: low-wage service sector work and high-skill technology employment. Gone are the living wage manufacturing jobs of the mid-century. Indeed, the US Department of Labor projects that, through 2005, employment in services and retail trade will represent 96% of employment growth.

When recipients do find jobs, they are usually in the service sector and seldom pay enough to obviate the need for any public assistance. A survey by the Urban Institute found that approximately 2/3 of former welfare recipients who found work were employed in service, sales, or clerical work—typically low-paying sectors. The same report found that in 1997, the median wage for former welfare recipients was a scant \$6.61 an hour. Another study, conducted by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, also found that a significant portion of those who found work did so in the far-from-stable field of temporary employment agencies. In New York City, a full 58% of respondents to a phone survey of former welfare recipients were earning \$15,000 a year or less.

"Even if people are working, they're often still eligible to get some assistance," sighs Friedman. "They're just getting cut off because the system is not accessible to them."

For all the talk about the healing power of work, many of those who have left welfare still find themselves depending on the state for help with basic needs. The UI study cited above also shows that only 12% of those leaving welfare did not receive any kind of public benefits. Nearly a third reported receiving food stamps; almost half reported that their children received Medicaid; 19% reported receiving child care assistance. It also found that 49% of former recipients were unable to pay their mortgage or rent; a full third reported having to cut the size of or skip meals due to lack of food.

Lesson Four: USA Rules!

One of the strongest themes of welfare reform has been the necessity of work. What has been obscured by the focus on work is the original purpose behind welfare: to alleviate poverty. Welfare was initially intended—at least in its public rhetoric—to help those that the economic system had left behind. Recent years, however, have seen the debate shift rightward, instead characterizing those who receive welfare as lazy freeloaders unwilling to take part in the system. The switch in approach has not gone without effect. A quick glance abroad shows how abysmal the US has been in terms of alleviating poverty.

The US ranks near the bottom of industrialized countries in terms of social spending, shelling out a mere 15% of its immense



GDP for such programs, according to a recent study released by the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care. Other industrialized nations with high levels of wealth, such as Germany and France, spend approximately one quarter of their GDP on social

economic "opportunity" that supposedly abound, the simple fact that, for most people, they either can't find a job or the jobs they can find aren't sufficient to eek out a life. Given what most of the jobs available look like, looking to welfare isn't even the most inexplic-

ONE OF THE STRONGEST THEMES OF WELFARE REFORM HAS BEEN THE NECESSITY OF WORK. WHAT HAS BEEN OBSCURED BY THE FOCUS ON WORK IS THE ORIGINAL PURPOSE BEHIND WELFARE: TO ALLEVIATE POVERTY

spending. Sweden, the welfare state giant, spends a full third. The use of state benefits is much higher in European countries than in the US, and it shows: poverty is dramatically lower.

While the US *pre-transfer* poverty rates (before entering welfare programs) are fairly comparable to other countries', its post-transfer poverty rates are abysmal. Adult poverty in the US stands at 20% pre-transfer, making a mild dip to 16% after welfare. Belgium, also at 20% pre-transfer, drops to a mere 5% after welfare. Despite Democrats' boasts about the work the Clinton administration has done to reduce child poverty, while 29% of American children are poor pre-transfer, 25% are still poor post-transfer. Compare that to France; though 27% of children are poor pre-transfer, only 7% remain poor after transfer into welfare programs.

Indeed, while the US ranks third in the world in terms of the UN human development index (a measurement of wealth, education, life expectancy, and other indicators of economic and social development) trailing only Canada and Norway, it falls rock bottom at the list of industrialized countries in terms of fighting poverty. Even with the second-highest income per capita (behind only Luxemborg, a tiny country of great wealth), the US has failed to effectively combat the problem it claims welfare reform will largely solve: poverty.

The US isn't just falling behind in terms of fighting poverty. In terms of literacy, the US lags far behind the Scandinavian social welfare giants—where work is far from the national priority. Norway, ranked second in the UN HDI, has a functional illiteracy rate of 8.5%; Sweden's illiteracy rate, with a HDI rank of 6, stands at 7.5%. The US, on the other hand, comes in with a rate of 20.7%, comparable to that of Western Samoa (20.3%), Swaziland (21.7%), and Lesotho (17.6%).

Lesson Five: Fuck Work, Let's Rock

Whether we want to admit it or not, work often does not pay for those at the bottom of the economic ladder. Welfare reform has become work-obsessed, often to the detriment of those it purports to help. As a nation, we've stopped looking at welfare as a means of helping those who the economic system leaves behind. Instead, we emphasize the importance of work—as if most people on welfare didn't already know it.

At its core, the emphasis on work assumes that those who seek help from welfare are too lazy to take advantage of the eco-

nomie choice of action; facing down a career in drive-thru telecommunications could make even the best of us run for the dole. The innumerable stripes and colors of social dislocation in the US have rendered perfectly intelligent people unable to deal. Sure, some can struggle through raising four children, working two full-time jobs, and going to school full-time, or any combination thereof, for the ultimate rags to riches story. But should that be held up as the norm? Not everyone has the same chances handed to them at birth, nor does everyone have the same fortitude for unending toil and struggle; welfare reform and the emphasis on work ignores that and, ultimately, punishes those who can't handle what often amounts to a life of low-paying, unending work. When the choice comes down to it, who wouldn't rather take care of their child at home instead of dishing out fast food french fries for five dollars an hour with no benefits?

Clearly, there will be people who take unfair advantage of public benefits. It's true that there are people who do little as active parents, yet stay at home, collect a check, and don't lift a finger. Still, even if there are people out there lazily collecting the miniscule checks afforded by public assistance, does it make sense to spend literally millions of dollars on administrative costs in order to ferret out the handful of "welfare cheats" instead of just letting them—along with the thousands who dearly need the benefits—collect the money they need to care for themselves and their children?

In a political climate where politicians are happy to extend a tax cut to middle class families—to help out, maybe give people more time with their kids—but balk at the idea of making it possible for a poor single mother to simply take care of her own children, it's clear that it's not that we, as a nation, oppose *all* government assistance. Much as the state is happy to spend millions on corporate subsidies, it doesn't mind using public funds to help those who have been able to take ample advantage of the recent economic upswing—largely middle- and upper-class whites. Welfare has gone from being a way to help those left behind by capitalism to a miserly pittance reluctantly thrown to people we consider too lazy to help themselves to the expanding economic pie. ©

Tracie McMillan is the editor of The Activist, a magazine on youth, culture, and politics published by the Young Democratic Socialists. She has worked as a research assistant for the forthcoming book Hands to Work, examining welfare reform in New York City, by LynNell Hancock.

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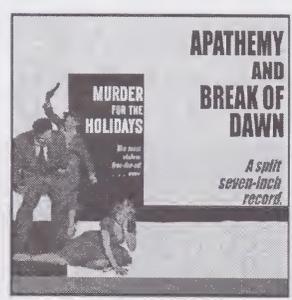


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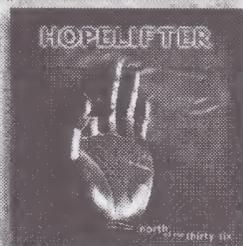
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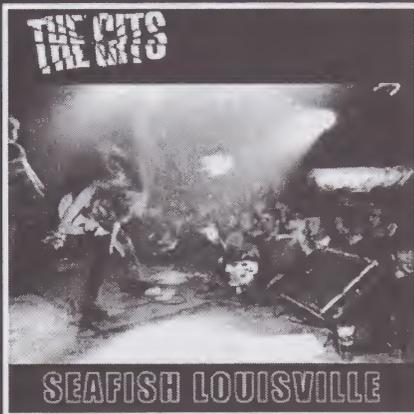
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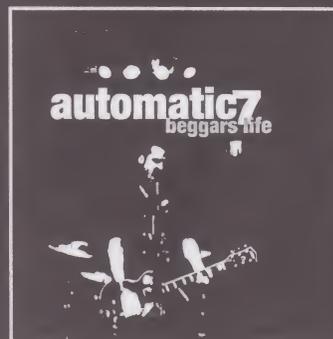
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Surrender

A Depriver case study

By Jennifer Heddle

There's a knock at the door, and I try not to panic. I sit up on the creaky futon and slip cloth gloves over my hands, glad the cold in my tiny apartment provides a good excuse for them. "Yeah?" Stay calm.

"It's Manuel."

I breathe a sigh of relief. "Hold on." I get up and unlock the door.

Manuel's a good kid, runs errands for me, picks up my welfare checks using a fake ID. He doesn't know I'm a Depriver, just thinks I'm a shut-in with an antisocial streak. If he does suspect the truth, he's not saying. And I'm not offering.

"Hey man, whassup," Manuel says, slapping my gloved hand. He's carrying a brown paper bag of groceries that he sets down on the kitchen table. "Got all your usuals."

"Thanks." I look him up and down. He's wearing tattered jeans and a dirty red T-shirt under his beat-up parka, and from the looks of his greasy dark hair he hasn't showered in a while. "You okay?"

"Whadda you think?" Manuel grins and his gold tooth winks at me. "Don't worry about me, man, I'm solid. Even got you a paper." He pulls a folded-up newspaper out of the bag and hands it to me smugly. "Got the last one."

"You're the best, Manuel." I scan the headlines. **BREAKTHROUGH IN GENETIC TESTING**, the banner reads. **EXPERTS MAY HAVE ISOLATED DEPRIVER GENE**. What a load of crap. They've been churning out this kind of stuff for months now. Everyone knows it's a propaganda smokescreen, an attempt to give people some semblance of hope.

Still, I want to be alone with the paper. "Okay, Manuel, get out of here. I got things to do." A bald-faced lie, but Manuel knows better than to pry.

"You got it man. Keep the peace!" he says, brandishing a clenched fist in the new anthem of the streets. The irony of the gesture is lost on him.

After Manuel leaves I sit back down on the bed, handling the paper with an almost reverent touch. Newspapers are hard to come by these days. Print runs have gone down thanks to stricter recycling laws, and to have one all to myself feels like a small luxury. Unfortunately, there's little of interest. Six Deprivers were arrested in a raid on an abandoned warehouse on the West Side. Apparently they had "failed to register with the proper authorities regarding their Depriver status." Didn't register, imagine that. They didn't want a life of public ostracism, forced government assistance, and constant monitoring of their whereabouts? Amazing.

I toss the paper aside in disgust. I jump when there's another knock at the door, tentative this time, soft and uneven. Busy day today.

"Delia?" I ask as my heart begins to pound. I already know it's her.

"Yes."

I get up again and let her in. She steps inside with a demure smile and I scowl at her, unimpressed. She always tries the Miss Innocent routine at first, as if I'm going to be fooled into thinking this is anything other than what it is.

I can't help but look at her, though. Her dark brown hair falls in a cascade over

her shoulders and her blue eyes fixate on me intensely. Delia is petite with an almost elfin face, and would be extremely attractive if not for the sickly, pallid sheen on her skin and the ugly blue and purple tracks on her arms.

"I know...I'm early," she says, her words a bit slurred, and I realize she's already high. She takes off her coat, throws it on the kitchen table, then sits down on the futon with an air of nervous excitement, her eyes still on me.

I take small, measured steps over to the bed and stand in front of her, my stomach churning.

She begins slowly, unbuttoning her threadbare cotton shirt and taking it off, then removing her bra. A few more efficient movements and she's completely naked. She's still watching me, taking in as much as she can in these last moments. I take off my own clothes and realize with disdain that I am already aroused. The gloves come off last.

Our eyes meet. "Go ahead," she says, her voice barely above a whisper. I lick my lips nervously, then reach out and place my hands over her small breasts, feeling her nipples harden against my palms.

I always know when it happens from the way her pupils cloud over and her jaw slackens. A sharp sound escapes from her throat, fear tinged with sexual excitement. I have never understood why blindness and sex are such a turn-on for her; I have never asked. Loss of control? Surrender? That's how I always feel when we do this. Like I'm surrendering.

I knead her breasts for a while,

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weighing them in my hands as she breathes in shallow breaths, before pushing her down on the bed and covering her body with mine. I run my hands up and down the length of her, over her unhealthy skin, the goose bumps that rise on her flesh, the scars on her wrists. I know this terrain, but each time I feel it like it is new territory. I commit it to tactile memory.

I look down at her face. Her gaze is wide, unseeing.

When I enter her, she smiles. Her legs lock behind my back and I drive into her, controlled at first, then building until I am beyond myself, beyond all shame or regret. I try not to be too loud, but Delia moans and whimpers and sighs. When I come, it is with a suppressed groan.

And then it's over. I withdraw from her, disgust stirring in my guts. I put my clothes back on as she starts feeling around for her own. I could help her, but I don't; she gets off on the darkness, on the helplessness.

She dresses herself with minimal difficulty, then heads for the door with accustomed ease. Before she leaves, she turns back to face me, as if she can still see.

"Thanks, John. I'll see you next week."

I nod in response, forgetting for a moment that she can't see me. "Uh, yeah. Next week."

I've barely put my gloves back on when yet another knock at the door startles me. Grand Central Station never had it so busy.

"Hey, man, it's me."

I get up, open the door. Manuel stands there with a stormy expression on his face. "What can I do for you?" I ask, straining to keep my voice even.

"You can tell me what the hell you're trying to pull," he snaps, dark eyes flashing.

"Get inside." He slips in and I lock the door behind him. Manuel's fists are balled

at his sides; he could probably take me out, easy. "What are you talking about?"

"That woman," he says impatiently. He paces the length of the studio, tension coiled inside of him, straining to be released. "I forgot to give you your change after I took my cut, so I came back to give it to you when I saw her," and he jerks his thumb toward the door, "coming in here. I didn't want to bother you—every man needs a little time with the ladies—so I just hung out for a while. I saw her leave, man. She was feeling around for the walls, like she was blind. She could see just fine when she came in here."

Speech over, he stops and folds his arms across his chest, his eyes filled with resentment.

"What do you want from me, Manuel?" I ask wearily.

"I want the truth, man. If you're a Depriver, just tell me. It's not like I didn't already think it. I ain't stupid."

I sigh in resignation and gesture for him to take a seat. After a moment's hesitation he complies and I sit down across from him on the futon, watching him carefully, my heart pounding. "You're right, Manuel. I'm a Depriver. And to answer your next question, no, I'm not registered. Why else would I be cooped up in this shithole?" I crack my knuckles as I wait for his response, not sure how to proceed. He's in his rights to do just about anything to me now. Deprivers, on the other hand, have few rights left, if any.

"Feds would give me good money to turn you in," he says. Belligerence colors his voice.

"I know."

He fidgets in the chair, still angry. "Just tell me one thing. Why you hanging out with a druggie skank like her? She gets off on you so you're doing her? Why?"

It's my turn to squirm. The reasons for Delia are hard to talk about, hard to even think about. But I have to try to make him understand. For my own sake.

"It's the only time I ever get to touch anyone," I say softly. "Delia's the only human being I've touched skin to skin in the past five years. I... I can't help myself. I need it sometimes. To touch someone. To remind myself that I'm alive. That I am human."

His dark eyes pierce mine and I hold my breath, waiting for condemnation, a searing remark. Instead he shakes his head and looks almost sad.

"I'm sorry, man," he says. He gets up and leaves, closing the door softly behind him.

I sit there, alone. Wondering if I should leave. Wondering if Manuel will turn me in. Wondering how much longer I can go on like this.

Waiting for the future to happen to me. ©

This story comes from the Deprivers Project, a collective of authors writing stories that deal with an alarming new epidemic called Sensory Deprivation Syndrome, based on a disease identified by Steven-Elliot Altman. All the proceeds from the stories go to the charities HEAL & f.a.c.t. The first collection is a book called The Touch, published by ibooks and due in stores by the time you read this.

Author Jennifer Heddle is an editor for New American Library, a division of Penguin Putnam Inc. She is also the writer and co-creator of the Xeric Grant-winning new comic Cynical Girl. Jennifer has graciously donated her author proceeds from this Depriver story to the charities HEAL and f.a.c.t. If you enjoyed this story why not check out the Deprivers Project @ www.deprivers.com

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COUNTDOWN TO CLEMENCY!

Leonard Peltier March for Freedom
Human Rights Day – December 10, 2000 New York City

Leonard Peltier is an Indigenous rights activist who has been unjustly imprisoned for 24 years despite the total lack of evidence against him. He is considered by Amnesty International to be a political prisoner who should be “immediately and unconditionally released.” The government has already been forced to admit that they cannot prove whom committed the crime he was convicted of; yet he still remains behind bars. Because of clear indication that he was targeted because of his role in the American Indian Movement, Leonard Peltier is often seen as a symbol of the U.S. Government’s attempts to silence those seeking positive change for Native communities.

Now Leonard Peltier is facing the most critical time ever in the campaign for his freedom and, indeed, his life. His only chance for a near-future release lies in the hands of President Clinton through through a grant of executive clemency. Now is the time of for us to join our voices together in making a call for justice too loud to be ignored! Come join the Leonard Peltier March for Freedom on December 10th. We will gather in Battery Park in NY City at 9:30am.

Leonard Peltier Defense Committee: PO Box 583 Lawrence, KS 66044

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DIY Research

By Janice Dillard

It's inevitable, no matter who you are—student, farmer, activist or just plain punk rocker—at every turn there it is: the need to do research. The word “research” may conjure up images of lab coats and stuffy study carrels, but let's face it, if you want to buy a car, take a trip, write a paper, find a printer for your zine, move or start that butterfly collection you've always dreamed of, you must do research.

Some research can be done from home or on the Internet, but nothing beats doing research at a library. Your local library has trained staff and resources that you won't be able to find anywhere else, so for the best results, head over to the library. No matter how hard librarians try, libraries can be intimidating places, so here are some tips that I hope will make your research more efficient and fun.

Think before you start

In order to get your research done efficiently, you should always know what you're going in to research before you go into a library, unless you just want to while away countless hours reading random books (which is, of course, a great way to pass the day sometimes!) Some research topics don't need a great deal of thought before you begin to work on them. For example, if you are looking for the blue book value of your 1975 Chevy Capri, you already have a focused enough topic that you can begin right away. Other topics however, may start out being extremely broad and in order to not waste unnecessary hours doing unnecessary research will need to be narrowed down before you begin your research.

Let's say you've got a history assignment to write an essay on World War II. There is a ton written about this subject, so before you ask a librarian to help you find information on it, put some thought into what aspect you want to write about or why you want to write about it. A topic this broad will have to be narrowed down in order for an interesting report to be written. Think about what “angle” if any that you may want to have, if you are trying to prove or disprove a theory, or state an opinion about something. Think about differing views and try to cover at least one other than your own. Stating differing viewpoints will make your paper more complete and doesn't mean that you agree with them. In fact, it can even be a way of discrediting them.

The research staff at a library are going to become your best friends when doing this type of research. Librarians are trained to help you find the information that you want (as opposed to the info that they think you should be looking for), so they will ask you a series of questions when you approach them in order to get a better understanding of what you are looking for. Don't be alarmed, this Q&A session, which in librarian lingo is called the “reference interview,” will help the librarian choose the best

sources for you to consult, so provide the librarian with as much information as possible on what you are researching and why (school paper, personal interests, etc.).

Finding the Right Library

You'd be surprised at how much time people waste going to libraries that don't have what they need. Picking the right library will save you time and give you access to librarians who are educated in the topic you are researching.

There is more than one kind of library to choose from. When you are choosing your library, think of the people that go there and you will get an idea of what its collection will be. Once inside, ask anyone for help, but if you have a really specific question, don't be afraid to ask if there is a particular librarian that knows a lot about your topic or if there is a separate department within the library that deals more specifically with what you are researching. These are the three basic categories of libraries:

Public These libraries have broad collections that cover a huge range of topics, are publicly funded (that means they're free!), have staff trained to help a wide range of people with a wide range of skills and interests, and nowadays usually have free Internet access for the public.

Academic/School Whether at the grade school or graduate school level, these libraries serve students who attend the schools the libraries are in. Academic libraries at the university level are often the best-funded and well-equipped libraries in any given area. The collections reflect the programs of the institutions. For example, an art college's library will have its strength in the visual and performing arts (this seems obvious, but you would be surprised at some of the confusion people have). Never assume that you have access to these libraries unless you are associated with the school. Keep that in mind, but don't give up hope. Most academic institutions foster learning and will grant access to people who have a need to use their collections. The rules for these libraries run the gambit, and some are even open to the public, so it's definitely worth a phone call. But if you are a student, you have no excuse: absolutely use your library. That is why it exists.

Special/Corporate Most medium to large sized cultural institutions (museums, aquariums, zoos, etc.) and businesses have libraries to support the research needs of their staff. Their collections are always specific to the type of work conducted at the organization. These libraries usually have rich and unique collections and often have what are called *primary* sources (documents that are first hand accounts of events). For example: An art museum library might have artists' files that contain exhibition announcements, correspondences, and slides. Keep in mind that these collections exist to serve

the institution's staff and are not always open to the public; your access may be refused or restricted, but often arrangements can be made if you have a compelling reason to need their collections. These types of libraries often have limited staff (sometimes only one over-worked librarian), so always call first and talk to the librarian about why you want to use the collection. S/he can let you know what the guidelines for use are, and if you need to make an appointment, etc. These libraries are usually the most focused and specific and have many unique and valuable items in their collections. If your research brings you to one of these, and you can sweet talk the librarian into letting you have access, you are usually in for a real treat!

Now that you have your library picked out, you're ready to get down to business. However, a warning is in order...

BEWARE THE INTERNET! It's *not* always out there, people. Remember, the Internet is a free for all and no one is organizing it, which means that no one is deciding the difference between "interesting and informative," "a bloody waste of my damn time" or "yucky." It's both the best and the worst thing about the Internet. That being said, I use the Internet every day. I find it to be the most useful for contact information, which I loosely define as addresses, phone numbers, show times, event listings—basically any current information that will get you to where you want to go or find someone for you. There are increasingly more useful scholarly sites on the Internet, but as a general rule, it should be used in conjunction with, and as a supplement to, other research (database and print), and not as an end-all wonder tool.

I don't want to spend time discussing the Internet here because I'm sure that many of you are already super savvy searchers (and boy, hasn't that topic been done *to death* in mainstream rags?). What's important to know is that there are a wealth of resources at your library that are usually faster and easier to use than the Internet. One of a library's most important resources is its librarians.

Librarians

Librarians are generalists by training. We learn to help people find all sorts of information in infinitely varied fields, but we also have our own interests and training/education. All librarians have bachelor degrees and many have advanced degrees in whichever disciplines they have chosen. Having the right librarian help you with your research makes all of the difference in the world.

When you arrive at your library, don't be too shy to ask if there is a librarian who is a specialist or knows about whatever subject you need to research. Librarians, like most people, like to talk about what they know, and most are happy to direct you to another librarian who is better qualified to answer your questions. Many libraries choose different types of librarians to fulfill the different interests of their readers. So when you are visiting the health sciences library on campus, ask away about biology, but save your questions about record production for the music librarian.

A good librarian can save you hours of research by being able to point you in the right direction quickly. But s/he can only point you. It's up to you to know what tools you need to use once

you're there. Those tools include a libraries catalogs, its books and the electronic databases it subscribes to.

Catalogs and Indexes

Many library *catalogs* (a listing of its holdings) are now online, but some are still in card catalogs. Both types are *indexes* to the collection. An index can be thought of as a finding aide or a summary and pointer to items in a collection. Instead of browsing through collections book by book, you search through cards or electronic records that are arranged by subject, author, etc. so that you can find what you are looking for faster.

Library catalogs are one type of index, but there are thousands of indexes that work as finding aides to different subjects. Finding out what type of indexes your library has and learning to use them is the most important part of research. This is where a librarian can really make all of the difference in your research. S/he is more familiar with which indexes would be helpful to you, and is trained to use them efficiently. S/he can even give some advice or recommendations like, "This one is great for current issues, but its coverage of anything before 1980 is really lame." These indexes will be in the reference part of the library, usually close to the reference desk since librarians use them all of the time.

Reference Books

While every index is a reference book (or tool, if it is electronic), not every reference book is an index. Other types of reference books include: dictionaries (of course), encyclopedias, almanacs, how-to books, and directories. Reference books are tools that give you subject specific information or direct you to how or where to find it. They can range from broad to specific and from scholarly texts like *The Dictionary of Art* (a 34 volume source) to more utilitarian directories like the Yellow Pages (which is really an index). New reference books are always being produced on any number of topics, like the *Encyclopedia of AIDS*, and the *Encyclopedia of Television*. These types of books are *only* going to be found at libraries and are helpful beyond words. Learn to use and cite them in your bibliographies for extra bonus points.

The Wonderful World of Online Databases:

Online Databases are electronic resources (CD-Rom, website, or telenet) that have subject-specific scholarly information organized and indexed so that you can access it easily. The information has been chosen for its academic merit and organized so that it is searchable by keywords (author, title, subject, etc.).

Many databases are just indexes, but increasingly many journal and magazine databases are being produced with *full text* capabilities. This means that instead of using the database to find article citations, then having to hunt down the magazine that has the article you want and finally making a photocopy of it, the databases include the full-text of the articles along with the citations. This means that you can print out the article directly from the computer, which saves a tremendous amount of time!

One catch is that there is not one uniform standard for creating and accessing databases, so they all have their own rules to follow. It is important when using an online database to take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with how it is organized and how to search it. If there isn't a librarian available to help you, there is usually a help or introductory page with tips on how to get to the information.

There are about a ka-gillion databases out there with coverage of broad to very specific subjects. *America History and Life*, *Expanded Academic Index*, and *Gender Watch* are just a few. They are usually accessible through the public terminals in the reference or research part of the library.

Database tips:

- Remember that more is not always better. It's better to have ten really good sources than 25 crap-ass ones
- When using full-text databases, please don't print off ridiculous numbers of articles that you aren't going to use! It's very wasteful and irritating to clean up after. Evaluate your articles online before printing them out.
- Always search more than one database, since they are created by companies or organizations that have their own biases.
- Try different search strategies when using online databases. For example, if you don't find the article you are looking for by searching by the author, try searching with keywords in the title. The article may be there, but it was indexed under the author's maiden name or some other variant like that.
- Finally, and this is *crucially* important, keep in mind that databases are not the end-all be-all. Remember that most electronic databases cover only the last 10-20 years of whatever articles and publications they index. This is *vitaly* important to keep in mind, since you may miss out on that really important article about the Sex Pistols that was written in 1978 if you only search online. You must check print indexes, big books that cover decades (and sometimes centuries) of articles, if you need *retrospective* coverage (older stuff).

Citations

This is the part of the article where everyone rolls their eyes and lets out the annoyed sigh and decides that I'm full of librarian shit, but I'm here to preach to you the power of the citation. The bibliography, or more accurately "works consulted," part of a paper or book is most definitely incredibly boring and time consuming to construct, but careful work on your end can make you look like a bad-ass researcher, win brownie points with your teacher, get you that job, help out a fellow researcher, or do something else really amazing. Consult a style manual, like *The Chicago Manual of Style: The Essential Guide for Writers, Editors, & Publishers* (or another reputable style manual) when writing your citations to get the right format.

I know you've probably wondered why in the hell you have to deal with citations, making sure that all of the commas and periods are in the right place. But I swear, it's one of those things like grade school math, that you don't understand why you have to

learn it and are convinced that you are never going to use it, until you do and then you're glad that you were forced into it. Same thing applies with citations, I swear! Here's why:

• **A Way to Represent** Citations say a lot about the quality of work that was put into your piece, whether it is a term paper, an article for your local newspaper, a website, or your kick around zine. You might be judged by the quality of the sources you consulted. A smart professor or editor will look at your sources to see what type of researcher you are. If she sees authoritative sources, then she will probably assume that you have done a good job researching and this will most likely affect your grade or work evaluation.

• **Finding Aide** A properly formatted, easy-to-use works consulted list isn't just helpful to make you look good, but it's super punk rock as well because it can help *others* out too. Good researchers always read the citations for articles they like because it gives them a good jumping-off point for further reading.

Of course, you can do the same thing in your research! Use the works consulted list of an author you respect to find out where and how *they* do research. You can think of it as a recommended reading list. Many researchers follow this technique to find useful information. It's a quick and easy way to access relevant information and if the author is a good researcher, it will save you valuable time. However, this should be viewed as a finding aide and not a replacement for looking for stuff on your own. If you copy citations and don't use the sources in your paper/book, then it's usually pretty obvious to the person reading your work and you could be in a whole mess of trouble (plagiarism). Remember, only record the sources you actually looked at and found useful. Many authors become known for the quality of their citations, just like many websites are known for the quality of their links.

Now Go Do Your Research!

All of this may seem really difficult and intimidating, but really it's not. Once you get familiar with the libraries around you, the little bit of intimidation you may feel when you walk into them will melt away. Libraries are one of the great human creations and have been around for thousands of years. Relish the power they bring you. Doing research, whether it's for a paper, for a zine or for your own enjoyment is an exhilarating experience once you get the hang of it. Always do your own research and be creative. You just might be the one to uncover an interesting fact, article, or phenomena that makes you famous! Doing research can even save innocent lives—it was a single teacher and a handful students doing research at Northwestern University that put a stop to the death penalty here in Illinois! Finally, have fun. Researching is learning and learning is a wonderful thing. Who knows, you might enjoy it so much, that you end up in library school! ☺

Janice Dillard is the General Collections Librarian at the Newberry Library, a public, independent research library concentrating in the humanities. www.newberry.org

things that go bump in

SEX SEX SEX SEX

When I agreed to write this column, I never thought that I'd get to play girl detective as well as amateur sex advisor. But after spending months hot on the tail of answers to this month's question—*Which birth control methods, sex toys and other nookie accessories are cruelty-free?*—I feel more like Nancy Drew than Dr. Ruth. Even if this weren't already a pretty good trade-off (uh, "titian-haired teen supersleuth" versus "grandma discusses your prostate," anyone?), all the trouble I had tracking down the dirt convinced me that this information *really* needed to be made more accessible. I don't know about you, but I'm not much for stopping to read labels while I'm getting some.

Birth Control

For all the work I did, however, I didn't come back with the best of news, at least for those of you interested in family planning. All hormonal birth control methods (Depo-Provera, Norplant, the Pill) are made by pharmaceutical companies and tested on animals, and as far as I could discover, most other forms of medical birth control (cervical caps, diaphragms, IUDs, sponges, and most brands of condoms) are all manufactured by these same companies, and the spermicide nonoxynol-9 has been extensively animal-tested. No one I spoke with seemed to have any information about Japanese brands of condoms (Exotica, Kimono, Skinless Skin, Maxx); if you're like me and completely committed to safer sex, or if you can live with the notion that "ignorance is vegan" or at least with the lesser of two evils, you might try these. Just be sure to watch out for that nasty nonoxynol-9.

Those of you utterly determined to have both cruelty- and baby-free intercourse may want to consider researching traditional herbal contraceptives. There's so much information on the Web about these alternatives that I won't bother listing sites; just searching under "wild yam," "neem" and "wild carrot seed" should give you weeks of reading. I will recommend a pamphlet entitled *Wild Yam: Birth Control Without Fear*, by Willa Shaffer (ISBN 0913923109), available from Woodland Books (1.800.777.2665), which gives doses and stresses the need for absolute unwavering consistency when using this method.

If you're considering any form of herbal birth control, you and/or your partner should also commit yourselves to charting your/her fertility cycle. One cool way to do this is with the Fertility Tracker (1.888.497.8679), which lets you detect estrogen (an indication of imminent ovulation) in cervical mucus or saliva.

I should also remind you that there ain't no pregnancy prevention quite like getting fixed, so if babies aren't *ever* in your future, please allow me to suggest that you trot your ass down to a Planned Parenthood near you.

Lubes

Despite returning with disappointing news for those of you concerned about animal testing and birth control, I was pleasantly surprised—no, *ecstatic*—about all the cruelty-free goodies available for making sex slippery and fun for everyone else. Since lubes are tops on my list of necessary sex accessories, I'm thrilled to say there are plenty of them manufactured without animal testing or by-products, including Embrace, Forplay, and ID; Eros, Eros Woman, and Hydra-Smooth (without glycerin for the yeast-prone among you); Liquid Silk, Maximus, and ID Millennium (all my personal favorites, and all without glycerin); and the big winner, glycerin-free Slippery Stuff, which is made by a woman-owned and operated enterprise committed to the environment (I love PC sex!). With all these good guys, only Astroglide, KY, and Probe are or have been tested on animals.

Non-leather strap on harnesses & bondage gear.

There's also plenty of non-leather S/M, bondage and strap-on equipment available too. Stormy Leather makes durable neoprene (wetsuit fabric) dildo harnesses in both black and purple, fake fur and satin tie-downs and blindfolds, synthetic and velcro cockrings, and vinyl restraints

the night

Gettin' It Cruelty Free
by Sheri Gumption

and collars. Aslan Leather makes the worlds most bee-yoo-ti-ful red and blue and silver sparkly vinyl (think banana bicycle-seat style) dildo harnesses and takes some custom orders for other equipment.

For those of you who want to strap it on but don't want to buy from companies who also produce leather, GD Productions (2400 Rio Grande #1-110 NW, Albuquerque NM, 87104) makes inexpensive, durable and eminently machine-washable denim and webbing harnesses. Your local hardware store is also a great resource; last time I checked, most rope and webbing isn't tested on bunny rabbits.

Sweat-shop free

Since "cruelty-free" doesn't just mean animals but also people, I also did my best to find some sex toys manufactured under decent worker conditions. Unfortunately, as much as I adore them, most things that go buzz in the night, especially the less-expensive battery-operated kind, are made in China, Hong Kong or Taiwan. A few vibrators are made in Japan (including the famous Hitachi Magic Wand) but I've heard too many rumors about unskilled workers from Southeast Asia and the Philippines flooding into Japan to feel comfortable that working conditions are much better there.

Happily, for those who love a good buzz without an aching conscience, at least one vibe, the Wahl Coil electric, is manufactured in the US. And since silicone transmits vibrations like nobody's business, pair your Wahl with one of the wonderful (bright colored! sparkly! marbled!) silicone goodies made by woman-owned and operated Vixen Creations (www.vixencreations.com) for years of guilt-free orgasms.

All condoms, lubricants and toys not followed by an address are available from Toys in Babeland (1.800.658.9119 or on the web at www.babeland.com) and from Good Vibrations (1.800.289.8423 on the web at www.goodvibes.com) to whom I owe a giant thank you for all the information provided, and where there is, I understand, ongoing debate within the collective about the conditions under which the products they sell are manufactured.

Got questions that a sexy Nancy Drew can answer? email me, Sheri Gumption, at djysex@punkplanet.com xoxoxox

fuck work

Punk Business 101

by James Squeaky (with assistance by Joshua Bennett)

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Because it's summer and everyone seems to be on tour, I had a hard time arranging any interviews and so I decided that I'd just go it alone this time.

Running a business, even a small punk business that you run out of your garage or bedroom, can be satisfying, but it can also be a real pain in the ass. You don't need to go to business school to figure out how to do it, but you really do need a lot of common sense and stellar organization skills. If you work with other people, you also benefit from not being a total jackass.

I don't agree with my former business partner Srimi, who said in previous columns something to the effect of, "everyone could and should start a business." I really don't think it is for everyone (or that everyone has the means or desire to start a business, even if it only requires a minimum of start-up capital). It really takes a certain type of person to start a business, keep it going, and raise it to the level that you find it to be "successful" (however you choose to measure that is up to you). I honestly feel that many more people would benefit from working with a pre-existing business and trying to make it better than starting something totally new.

With the way the job market is right now, it's pretty easy to get a job, but fairly difficult to assign any kind of security to your position. In a temp-driven job market, the idea of benefits, projected income and security can be unnerving. In this kind of environment, in comes this common "American Dream" train of thought that if only you could own your own business, you'd be self-reliant and not work for some evil corporation. This is true, but I have to say that sometimes we make our own worst bosses. Unless you have the ability to keep yourself very calm and relaxed, you will probably end up kicking yourself for not getting as much done as you had intended a good majority of the time. As bad as this sounds: when you have a boss, at least you have someone to hate. When you are your own boss, there's no one else to blame but yourself.

Running your own business, there are no such thing as "vacations." It's pretty hard to escape the all-consuming tasks that you place on yourself. You'll never "finish"

a shift and then go home. There is always a bunch more that should be done and you'll probably remain stressed until you get it done, only to find that it's time to move on to the next task.

It's entirely exhausting. There is no security, no health benefits and income tends to fluctuate unpredictably. Most businesses fail within the first two years.

On the other hand, if you love what you are doing and do have complete control over it and find that it's going in a direction that you like, then running a business can be very satisfying. It will quickly begin to define who you are (You'll soon become "Dan Sinkers-Punk Planet guy" or "Sticker Guy Pete," like your business or project is a part of your name or something) and everyone will want to be your friend and want to help you out. Just a warning: 90% of these people who offer to help out will flake on you, so don't get too excited.

One thing that I really have questions about and have been exploring (and will continue to explore) in my interviews is why punk business choose to organize themselves the way that they do. It is almost to be assumed that a person or business that considers itself "punk" would subscribe to a strong anti-Capitalist philosophy, yet so many, nay, *most* punk business choose to still follow the same model as most non-punk businesses, albeit scaled down. Justifications are made that "in order to counter the machine, the same tools have to be used" and I am somewhere between agreeing and disagreeing. I've seen really great examples of punk businesses successfully using a cooperative structure and ones using a capitalist structure. I've also seen a lot of really unsuccessful examples of each.

Another issue I've been thinking about is in regards to competition and its necessity. It would seem that competition would counter the goals of the punk community. If prices for products and services are kept fair and reasonable, it would be assumed that they would not have to be dictated by free enterprise and the fear that another business will come along and under-cut your prices. After all, we're supposed to all be in this together and there is certainly enough to go around for everyone.

On the other hand, that's probably just a fairly head-in-the-clouds, unrealistic expectation.

As for running a business that considers itself "punk," I'd like to echo the sentiment made by fellow columnist Mimi Nguyen in her "Fuck Unamerican" article in MRR #200. Mimi basically said that just because you label yourself as a "punk business," doesn't absolve you from the responsibility that you have to take for your actions and words. If you are making claims that all profits go back into the business or that you are going to do such and such for the punk community, then you should definitely follow through with it.

As a conscientious and critical community, no one is above scrutiny. This doesn't mean we have to be vicious with each other, but we definitely should be open to dialogue and be held accountable for our actions.

I've been thinking about this a bunch and my friend Josh helped me put a lot of the ideas together. To me, what I think makes a business "punk" is:

- 1) Following the DIY ethic as much as possible. You should be

creating something that is of value to the world and/or the punk rock community. You should Support the punk community through your business. Get your stickers and/or T-shirts printed by Diesel Fuel Prints and/or Sticker Guy, have Christen Carter at Busy Beaver or Bri at Badge Brigade make your buttons. Get your posters screen-printed at Firehouse. Get Furnace to press your CDs, etc. If you need stuff printed, find a small printer in your town who uses as much organic materials as possible and who donates their services to cool shit (not that you should ask them for a donation—you should pay because you're running a business).

2) Money is always a really sticky subject in regards to "punk businesses" and it's been redefined many different times. I don't think what's important is how much money you bring in, but how you use it. A "punk business" shouldn't let the bottom line become more important than whatever its goal is. Common goals of punk businesses are A) creating something of artistic merit (records, zines, etc.) B) benefiting the community in some way (distros getting important literature and music into people's hands). C) providing a service that might already be available, but in an independent and DIY fashion.

I think it's pretty safe to say that most punks would agree that if you make a surplus of money, the solution would be finding ways to put it back into the punk community: giving money to help start venues, Food not Bombs, shelters, etc. I don't mean to exclude "non punk" communities, that's just what I'm focusing on here.

OK. So from working on Unamerican for so long and knowing a lot of other people who have had experiences with running punk businesses, here's my advice for Punk Business people and running a business.

1) Before you start, write some shit down! Get a very clear idea of what you want to do, what you believe, and what you'd be willing or not willing to do to achieve your goals. Do you want to change the world or just sell some records? Look at other business models: from huge corporate businesses to the hot-dog vendor down on Market Street. Look at other punk businesses and find out how they have succeeded or failed. Many good interviews/articles exist throughout *Punk Planet*, *Maximum Rock and Roll*, *Profane Existence*, *HeartattaCk*, *Mister Ridiculous* (plug), etc. Write down your goals and dreams, big and small and have a clear idea and be able to express that idea to others. That way when questions come up, you know where you stand. You should be able to sum up what your business is and what you want to achieve in one sentence.

Along with this, do something unique. If you are going to start another record label, how are you going to do it in a way that is new and innovative? How are you going to provide value to the community? How are you going to justify the resources you are using (environmentally speaking) as being valuable? Is it really worth the possibility of stress, headaches, money and, ultimately the statistically, nearly guaranteed possibility of failure?

2) Know that if you go into business with another person, there is a very, very strong possibility that someday you won't be friends any-

more and base your actions accordingly. Not to be negative, but "shit happens." I've actually yet to see an example of two punk friends going into business together and remaining friends a couple of years down the road. Take the stress of running a business and then add morals and divisions of artistic input and you have a recipe for disaster.

It's a very good idea to clearly define your goals with them. Also, very clearly define what your roles are going to be. Be realistic and follow through as much as possible. And please, for the love of God, put shit down on paper so you can go back and look at it later. A handshake agreement is bullshit and stupid.

Realize that often times, one person will be focused on in reference to your business and this can be difficult to the person who is considered the "sidekick." If you are able to define the roles, it will be easier to tell people what each person does. Give yourself titles—make them silly and outrageous, it's fun and important.

You should also have a clear idea of how the business will continue after you and your partner aren't friends anymore (or if it will not). Do this while you are still friends and are thinking fairly. I equate running a business with someone as marriage and as any child of divorce has experienced, it's pretty tough to divide up when the two partners hate each other.

And, as a side note: Don't ever go into business with your significant other. Just don't do it. If you do, don't say I didn't warn you.

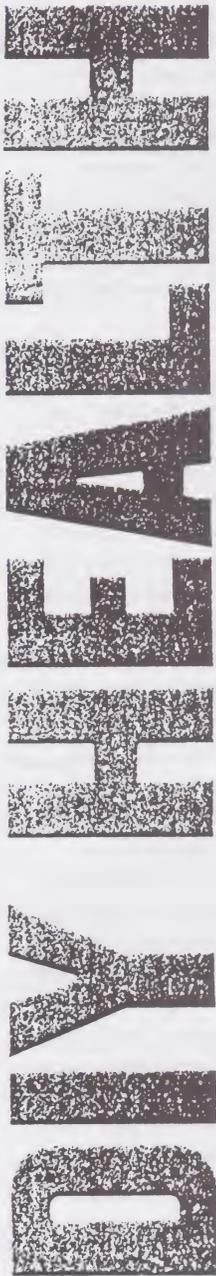
3) To quote Sonny Kay of GSL/Bottleneck, "Never underestimate the value of a good accountant." Keep track of everything. Keep written and printed records of every transaction in a way that makes sense not only to you, but also to other people. Be anal about keeping receipts and writing everything down. Even if you are small and aren't paying taxes or whatever, know whether your business is making or losing money and just how much it is. This seems obvious, but when I left Unamerican, we had no idea whether we were making or losing money. A lot was coming in and a lot was going out.

If you grow at all, it's fairly likely you will end up "going legal." (which is a whole 'nother bag of worms.) If you are already in practice keeping records, it'll make that much easier. You don't need a degree in business to keep track of everything. Just acquire a cheap spiral notebook and write down all your expenses, income, etc. It's much easier to keep track of things as you go than be forced into a position of going back and figuring everything out.

These lists could be expounded on to the point of a book. I don't want to scare you from starting your own business if you want to, but I really don't think most people have any idea how much effort and dedication it really takes to do something like this. Running a business can be great for some people, but before you do it, get an idea of what you're doing. Go volunteer or intern for some businesses that you consider "punk," or look up to and see what the positive and negative aspects are. Learn from the experience. I wish you a lot of luck.

I'd love to hear what you like or dislike about my columns. Drop a line to james@misterridiculous.com

in sickness and no wealt



I thought I'd cover skincare over the next two issues. This issue I'll deal with things that can happen to your skin, like scabies, ringworm, cuts & abrasions, sunburns, dry skin, athlete's foot and insect bites. Next issue I'll give you some cool homemade recipes for facial masks and scrubs. I hope you find this practical and useful. Good Luck and Good Health to you!

Scabies

Scabies is caused by itch mites. The female mite lays her eggs under the skin and when hatched, the mites burrow their way out, causing severe irritation and itching. You will see small groups of red lumps when it first appears. You may also see fine wavy lines emanating from some of the lumps if you look closely enough. The skin may then become dry and scaly. The areas most commonly affected would be your little tushy, your wrists, armpits and the skin between your toes and fingers.

Doctors will prescribe pymethrin, which is a pesticide, to treat Scabies. There's no way in hell I would willingly put pesticides on my skin. I'd rather try the all-natural remedies first. You might too, read on for relief:

You can take garlic capsules, or raw garlic to help build up your immune system and fight off these little fuckers. If you take capsules, follow the directions on the bottle. If you decide to eat it raw, eat it anyway you can, and as much of it as you can. In this case, the more the better. Especially in the summer months, when you're sweatin' your ass off, that garlic will just permeate every pore in your body. I bet that'll evict those little pests!

After you have overloaded your body with garlic, soak in a nice warm bubble bath with "Not Nice to Lice" brand shampoo—I imagine you can use another brand, if you are unable to locate this one.

Next, apply this homemade lotion: 2 fl. oz./50 ml of glycerin, (you can find this

in any pharmacy, and the cost is approximately \$2-3), add in 5 drops of tea tree, lavender, lemon, eucalyptus, clove and peppermint oil, (you can find these at your local health food store). Mix well, then apply to the affected area 2-3 times daily.

Wash your linen and bedding frequently. You can also mix 1 tsp. of tea tree oil with a bottle of rubbing alcohol. Shake it up good and put it into a spray bottle. Next, spritz down your mattress, and wipe it down. Also, disinfect your shower, combs, brushes, toiletries, wash damp towels and vacuum. You have to be scrupulously clean until your skin clears up, as scabies is passed on from person to person, and some of the shit you touch too!

Do all this daily until it clears up. **When to see a doctor:** If this does not clear up, or it's getting worse, then see a doctor.

Cliff Clavin Tidbit: Did you know that a female mite will lay 1-3 eggs in your skin daily? Keep clean and stay on top of it!

Ringworm

A worm does not cause ringworm, it is a fungal infection. It may start out as a pimple or sore and then develop into a ring shape rash. The most common spots is the scalp, your trunk (especially those fat folds/rolls and the bra lines), and the nails. The fungus may take over the whole nail, causing it to become thick, pitted, grooved and abnormal in shape and color.

Ringworm is passed on from person to person, just like scabies. In fact, you can even get Ringworm from your pets, like I did about 10 years ago. I took my cat to the vet, and he came home with ringworm, then I got it from him. It was a nightmare! It's easy to keep the house and yourself clean and disinfected, but try following your cat around and disinfecting everything he touches. Luckily, pet stores have a lot of shampoos, soaps, and lotions to take care of it, and you can use it too. Your largest variety of products to get rid of ringworm would be a horse store, such as a Farm and Fleet type store. Ringworm is very common in horses, and there are many products out there.

You can take garlic capsules, or raw garlic to help build up your immune system. Follow the same treatment as with Scabies.

Apply tea tree oil to the ringworm, 3-4 times daily. You can always dilute the tea tree oil with some vegetable or olive oil, if you have sensitive skin.

If you have a lot of redness and cracks in your skin, you may have developed a bacterial infection on top of the fungal infection. Betadine solution is a great antibiotic liquid. Just place 2 capfuls in 1 quart of warm water, and then soak your feet for about 20-30 minutes 1-2 times daily.

Bathe daily with 8-10 drops of tea tree oil or get tea tree shampoo and create a relaxing bubble bath. Afterwards, put

PLEASE NOTE: I am not a Doctor or Licensed Herbalist, so please use the recipes, advice and other information here at your own risk. If you are nursing or pregnant, do not use any herbs or supplements without supervision from your midwife, herbalist or doctor.

The Skin You're In

by Angel Page (with special guest Cliff Clavin)

bleach in a spray bottle and spritz down the bathtub and tiles. Let it set for a minute or so. Rinse with hot water. **Use common sense when handling bleach.** Be careful not to get it in your eyes, or to inhale the bleach mist. Wash your damp towels, washcloths, anything that touches your rash. It's very contagious. Follow the same guidelines for cleaning as you would for scabies.

Dry skin

I have always battled with dry skin and awful hangnails. So here's my favorite homemade hand cream recipe (this recipe is fabulous, especially in the winter), along with a few other all-natural remedies to combat that flaky, itchy skin of yours.

• Homemade hand cream:

1 tsp. of beeswax

1.4 tsp. of honey

4 tbsp. of almond oil, (you may use olive oil, but it's not as creamy as the almond)

4 tbsp. of your favorite essential oil

Put the beeswax, honey, and almond oil in a glass jar/coffee cup standing in a small pan of hot water. Stir until melted and blended well. Stir while pouring in the essential oil. Take the jar out of the water and continue to stir until the mixture has cooled.

Add ten drops of geranium oil, ten drops of chamomile oil, 5 drops of lemon oil, and 5 drops of lavender oil to 2 tsp. of vegetable or olive oil. Massage into the affected area. It's great for hangnails too.

• Mask for dry skin: Mix 2 tbsp. of clay (found at health food stores), 2 tsp. of honey, 2 tsp. of cornstarch, 1 egg yolk, and 1 tsp. of evening primrose oil (if you are unable to find this oil, you can always buy the capsules, they are similar to vitamin E. Open and drain as many capsules as needed until you have your teaspoon). A few drops of rose, lavender, or sandalwood oil (whatever your preference). Once mixed, apply to dry skin; you may also use this on your face too. Leave mixture on for 15 min. then rinse off with some cool water.

• Chamomile and honey mask. This mask smoothes and softens dry skin.

Ingredients:

1 tbsp. of dried chamomile flowers (found in health food stores, usually in the bulk section)

3/4 cups boiling water

2 tbsp. of bran

1 tsp. of warmed honey.

Pour the boiling water over the flowers for 30 minutes.

Then strain the infusion and compost the chamomile flowers. Next mix 3 tbsp. of the liquid with the bran and honey. Then apply to face, or any other dry patches of skin. Leave on for 10 minutes, then rinse with warm water.

Cliff Clavin Tidbit: Did you know that skin is the largest organ of the body?

Cuts, Scrapes and abrasions:

Cuts and the like can be not a big deal or they can be really major. First and foremost, you need to determine if you need to go to a doctor. If you answer "yes" to *any* of the following questions, then go see a doctor.

-Is your bleeding bright red and spurting?

-Can you not seem to get the dirt out of the wound?

-Is the cut/scrape on your face and you are concerned about scarring?

-Has your wound developed a red streak that weeps pus and extends more than a finger-width beyond the cut?

-Is the wound large and you can see way down inside?

-Have you not had a tetanus shot within the last 5 years?

If you have answered "no" to *all* these questions, then you can probably treat the cut yourself. Follow the advice listed below.

• After washing the wound with soap and water, apply 1-3 drops of lavender oil or tea tree oil to the wound or bandage. Reapply the oil 2 times daily until the area is healed.

• You can use an over-the-counter antibiotic cream/ointment. Make sure you clean the wound with soap and water, then apply the ointment, and cover with a band-aid or gauze. Change as needed.

• A bit of advice: Don't let the wound get dry and cracked. It will heal faster if it is moist, plus it will minimize scarring.

Athlete's foot

Athlete's foot is a fungus that lives and breeds in moist conditions—the perfect environment is your little piggies! The symptoms are cracked skin, oozing blisters and an intense burning and itching. To get some relief, read on:

• Apply a few drops of tea tree oil to your foot, making sure not to forget in-between your toes and the nails too. Do this several times a day. If you have sensitive skin, or the skin is broken, you may dilute it with vegetable or olive oil.

• Foot Powder #1: For daily use. Mix 3 tbsp. of unperfumed talc or corn-flour (found at health food stores), with 5-6 drops each of tea tree oil, lemon, eucalyptus or lemongrass and lavender. Allow the powder to absorb the oils for 24 hours before applying. Use daily to absorb moisture.

• Foot Powder #2: For daily use. Mix 1 oz of powdered black walnut shells, 1/2 oz. Powdered calamus root and 1/4 oz. Powdered sage. If you are unable to find these three ingredients in powdered form, you may buy them whole and grind them up in a coffee grinder. Store in a cool, dry place away from sunlight.

• Soak your feet in 1 cup of vinegar, plus 4 cups of water for 10 minutes, twice daily.

• You may use an over-the-counter product too, but please keep this in mind: most major commercial brands commit vivisection. Your best bet to avoid buying and supporting these companies is to

buy the generic brand when possible. If you decide to go this route, use it 2-3 times daily, and continue its use for four weeks.

• Baking soda paste: Mix 1 tbsp. of baking soda and enough warm water to make a paste. Next, rub it all over your foot, especially in-between your toes. Leave it on for a few minutes, then rinse. After you have thoroughly dried your toes, and discarded the towel into your hamper...yes you heard me right. Don't use that towel over again; wash it! You then should dust your toes with a foot powder (see the aforementioned recipe).

When to see a doctor: When the whole foot is red and swollen, sore to the touch and is blistered and oozing.

Burns

To know whether or not you can treat burns yourself, it is *crucial* that you know what kind it is. It's fairly easy:

First degree burns: sunburns and scalds. You can treat these yourself.

Second degree burns: blisters. You can treat these yourself too.

Third degree burns: Charred and white or creamy colored skin. Usually not painful because the nerve endings have been destroyed. **Third degree burns always requires a doctor's care. Don't fuck around.**

If you've got a first or second degree burn though, you can totally treat them yourself. Immediately hold the affected area under cold tap water for about 15-30 min. Then apply lavender or tea tree oil to the burn. Reapply at least 3 times a day until the skin has healed. If you don't have this oil around, you can apply aloe vera or cucumber juice to the burn too.

Calendula cream or oil helps the skin to heal in the latter stages and also helps prevent scarring. You can find it at health food stores.

Sunburn

I'm sure you know what sunburn is, so I won't insult your intelligence by explaining the symptoms. Do the following to get some relief:

- Add a cup of vinegar or baking soda to your bath water to help take the sting out.
- Puree several cucumbers in a blender/food processor. Strain out the solids, then apply a compress soaked in the juice to the sunburn.
- You can apply the store off-brand "Noxzema" equivalent to your burn. This will moisturize and cool your skin at the same time.
- Combine 6 drops of lavender oil to 1/2 cup of aloe vera gel and apply as needed. Excellent moisturizer and effective in healing your skin.

Cliff Clavin Tidbit: Did you know that sun damage is cumulative and by age 18 we've been exposed to up to 80% of lifetime sun (children are outdoors about 3 times more than adults). By regularly using sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher from birth through age four, it may be possible to reduce the risk of skin cancer by 50%; if sunscreen is used through age 18, cancer risk may be reduced by up to 78%.

Insect bites

This definitely doesn't need an explanation or definition. You

know when you've been bitten. **When to see a doctor:** If you develop hives, swelling of the face, shortness of breath or wheezing, difficulty swallowing, lightheadedness or fainting. These symptoms will most likely happen within minutes to an hour after you have been stung. Not all swelly, and you can breath just fine? Read on for relief:

• Combine 2 oz. powdered myrrh, 1 oz. powdered goldenseal, 1/2 oz. powdered cayenne, and 1 quart of 100 proof vodka in a jar, and cap tightly. Shake it daily for 14 days, then strain, press through cheesecloth, or a clean white washcloth or dishtowel (you'll want to squeeze all the medicinal goodness out of the herbs before discarding them). Next, place the liquid in a bottle and store it in a cool, dark place away from the sun. Apply to insect bites as needed. Obviously, you should make this in advance.

• If you have swelling and pain, take an anti-inflammatory such as Motrin. If it itches, apply topical hydrocortisone to the bite. That should alleviate some of the discomfort.

• Natural bug repellent recipe: You may ask, "Why go through all the trouble, when you can purchase OFF, or Cutters, Avon's Skin-so-Soft or another leading brand?" Because the synthetic ingredient in the popular store brands is *N,N diethyl-m-toluamide*, and this ingredient is associated with rashes, muscle spasms, seizures, and even death. Up to 56% of the ingredient applied topically penetrates our skin and up to 17% is absorbed into our bloodstream. If you think about it, that's actually pretty scary. Avon's Skin-so-Soft has to be applied every 30-40 minutes. I personally don't feel like applying this product every 1/2 hour, plus I'm not sure where they stand on animal testing. The following recipe is all natural, and smells good too!

Combine the following essential oils:

- 2 droppers of citronella (that would be the little dropper that is connected to the cap. Fill it twice.)
- 1 dropper of eucalyptus
- 1 dropper of lemongrass
- 5 drops of basil
- 5 drops of tea tree oil

Then find yourself a spray bottle that will hold about 4 oz. And in that bottle mix 1 tsp. of your essential oil mixture, to 4 oz. of vegetable or olive oil. You can also add it to a sunblock lotion too. Spray or rub on when needed.

Cliff Clavin Tidbit: Did you know that only female mosquitoes bite?

That's about wraps up a bunch of the gross, itchy or annoying things that can happen to your skin and what you can do about it. Next issue, I'll hook you up with a bunch of cool recipes to make your skin feel & look nice! ☺

Please feel free to write me with any questions or concerns: Angel Page c/o Makoto Recordings PO Box 50403, Kalamazoo, MI 49005 or via e-mail at: angelpage@hotmail.com

Sources:

- The Herbal Medicine Cabinet*, by Debra St. Claire
- Prescription for Nutritional Healing*, by James Balch & Phyllis Balch
- The Complete Book of Herbs*, by Andi Clevely & Katherine Richmond
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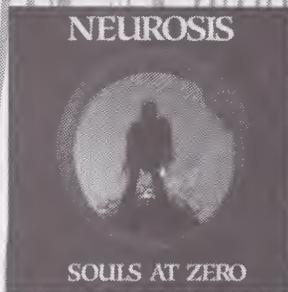
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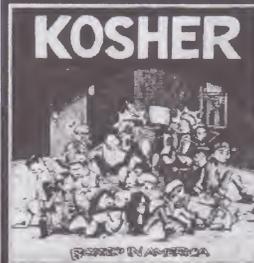
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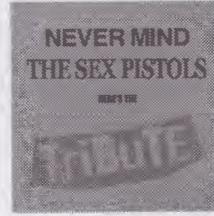
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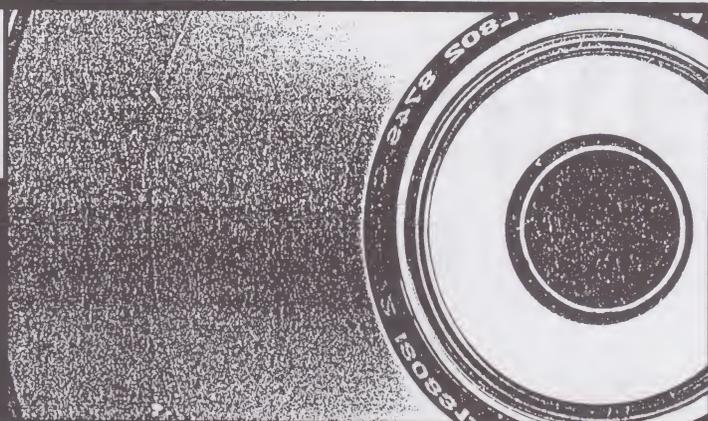
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PLASTIC

MUSIC



100 DEMONS – IN THE EYES OF THE LORD, CD

A number of years ago I saw this band called Bloodbath from my W. Mass hometown scene (Youth Shock Brigade). There was a distinct sound about this old school HC band, especially with the vocals. Some hated this band, most really dug 'em. They later progressed to the more thrash side of hardcore, and then before you know it, they parted ways. A few years ago I heard Bruce LePage (the vocalist) started a new band, but no one could remember the name of it or some of the younger kids in the scene didn't know much about Bloodbath to make the reference. Well, here I am a few thousand miles away from my old hometown scene and what falls into my possession? 100 Demons, Bruce's new band. It's what I expected from Bruce and the direction he was heading. 100 Demons play some serious fucking hardcore. This CD is a full, thick, pounding death march of a record and has some crushing breakdowns to make this a no holds barred release. Whether it's the double pedal or the grinding guitars or the voice that could give a grandmother nightmares, this band cannot be stopped. 100 Demons just deliver blow after blow whether it's musically or lyrically with songs full of rage, hate and contempt and a soundtrack to match. Hardcore doesn't get much harder or tougher than this. Without a doubt, 100 Demons is the prime example of what East Coast, tough guy hardcore metal is capable of. In The Eyes Of The Lord is one rocking record from the first track to the last that's not to be taken lightly. Keeping the tradition of the "Hero" alive. (DM)

ARAB ON RADAR – SOAK THE SADDLE, CD

First off, this is not for everyone. This is a project band that has a chaotic style to it that is definitely aimed at a certain crowd. Those familiar with the style of avant-garde or exper-

imental music or just really enjoy messy punk will relate to what this band is about. Sure this is chaotic and going in every direction, but Arab On Radar has this certain charm to them. The music is so alive and struggling like animal stuck in a trap but at the same time so very rhythmic like a factory machine. The lyrics on the other hand are another story. There seems to be a theme of teenage coming of age, puberty and learning about sexuality that can be seen as being pretty fucked up on this collection. There is a definite poetic overtone presented in a very crude manner on each track. Arab On Radar's vocalist also has an interesting style that reminds me of the Crucifucks which compliments the music so well. Soak The Saddle is an interesting collection to say the least. (DM)

AVAIL – ONE WRENCH, CD

Granted I came into knowing about Avail late, as for a long time I just thought that it was the brand name of a backpack that I never recognized, and I can actually say, without embarrassment, that I do own one of their albums. God knows which release (fifth?) that this is for these now long running hardcore stalwarts. But once again they deliver the goods. Driving, uncompromising, uplifting tunes that lead the charge for activism in the new millennium. Avail often relies on anthemic choruses in the same way that vintage straight edge bands used mosh parts to build intensity. Many of the songs seem to deal with the pain and anguish one feels while trying to remain steadfastly right in an often unjust world. "Have you ever been kicked when you're already down" is a good lyrical theme for this album. Although I wasn't as moved by this as when I had first heard "4AM Friday" or possibly by hearing the early stuff that I've never heard, this is still a good continuum of an effort taken respectfully. Next time, I like to see them push it and kind of reinvent themselves. (AS)

.357s – HOURS AFTER DAWN, CD

Poppy alternative rock that sounds like the Replacements when they got bad. Twangy guitars and a touch of alt country is a formula for suck. (NS)

Hello 100 East Vine, Suite 809, Lexington, KY 40507

4 HEADS DEEP – ROUND ONE, CD

There's a lot of energy behind this fast paced released. Bay Area styled punk with some ska breakdown shows off a lot of promise for these guys from Boston in the future. However, 4 Heads Deep should have held out for a bit to make a better recording. (DM)

Mindtree Records

24 IDEAS – DISCOGRAFIA COMPLETA, CD

Half English, half Spanish semi-political hardcore from Spain. I suppose if you live in Spain and don't get too many good touring bands out your way, this might be new and exciting. With songs like "Where's HC?", which examines the politics of the typical show-goer, it just

makes me laugh. (ES)

Score Disc. Apdo. Co. 35221, 08080 Barcelona

■ 100 DEMONS – IN THE EYES OF THE LORD, CD

See review above.

Goodlife Recordings, PO Box 114, 8500 Kortrijk, Belgium

ACTION LEAGUE – CLEAR VIEW MIRROR, 7"

Excellent pop in the vein of the Goo Goo Dolls' early punk sound. Two fun songs by this defunct band, in a silk-screened cover. (AE)

Tiger Suit Records, PO Box 15482, Long Beach, CA 90815

AGENT 86 – NEW WAVE SUCKS, CD

This is a reissue of 3 of Agent 86's records from the mid 80's. Political punk that was melodic, but predated pop punk. If you liked this band before, this is a good way to get their records on one easy format. (NS)

Boislevé, B.P. 7523, 35075 Rennes Cedex 3, France

ANNALISE – TOUR ISSUE, CD

The UK's Annalise play damn listenable intricate pop with

snobby, but smart lyrics about growing into and out of punk. Depressing. (AE)

Ding Dong Ditch, PO Box 2409, Kalamazoo, MI 49003-2409

ANYWAY – SPACE GAME, 7"

2 songs of rockin' emo/post hardcore. Similar to Texas Is The Reason or Starmarket. Very polished sound. (NS)

anyway_music@hotmail.com

■ ARAB ON RADAR – SOAK THE SADDLE, CD

See review above.

Skin Graft Records, PO Box 257546 Chicago, IL 60625

AUTOMATIC 7 – BEGGAR'S LIFE, CD

Do I dare call them a "power trio"? Automatic 7 play a mix of aggressive, dirty and loud melodic punk rock, and this ten song CD is a nice follow up to this LA group's first album. (ES)

Vagrant 2118 Wilshire Blvd. #361, Santa Monica, CA 90403

AUTOMATIC 7 – BEGGAR'S LIFE, CD

The first song on this is great, but the rest didn't hold my interest the whole time. Dead-ringer Mike Ness vocals backed by

About our new review section: We still review all the records we receive, but we only give longform reviews to records our review staff decides they want to highlight. That doesn't mean the ones that get short reviews aren't worthy, just that the reviewer decided that they could write about another record better. Also, we now give each reviewer a "spotlight" section, where they can write about an old album they really liked and write about what they're currently listening to. Finally, if a reviewer doesn't like it, you don't. It's not institutional policy that your record is good or that it's bad, it's just one reviewer's opinion—so don't freak out. We're sure you put a good deal of work into your project, and that alone is certainly worth some congratulations! But please, if you're pissed at a review, remember: it's not Punk Planet, it's just one reviewer.

BANTAM ROOSTER – BIG MESS, 7"

Not too often can a seven inch of covers invoke as much excitement as this release has in my house. Bantam Rooster are a two piece (guitar / traps) punk rock force that has had a pair of stellar LP's and a handful of singles to boot. This record was done with the old lineup featuring Eric Cook on drums. If you think that you can't cover Devo, the Saints, and the Gibson Brothers with only a two piece then you don't understand Bantam Rooster, plus they get a little help from Jim Diamond on synth and extra guitar. First Devo's "Big Mess" gets the treatment and its no small task to cover Devo – but this is one time that it was done right. Next, the Saints "Private Affair" gets a straight up rendition. I have always wanted to cover this song with my old band but didn't think we would get it right, but after hearing this version I realize that you can do it sloppy and it can still sound like a classic. You will sing along and throw things to this song. Finally, the Gibson Brothers "Dirt Preacher" gets an extra wah-wah pedal and frankly it's not the reason to buy this single – it doesn't have the Rooster sound. If you have never heard Bantam Rooster, this single is as good as any to start with. (EA)

CONVULSIONS – ANGRY SONGS FOR YOUNG LOVERS, CD

We have sappy, whiny pop punk, laughably retro rock-a-billy and cliched British punk – all of which are nice in controlled doses, but seem to run together after one too many Queers, Social D, or Exploited records. Certainly the last thing that jaded punk rock kids need is more of the same. The Convulsions take what is great about those small shots of pop punk, rock-a-billy, and Brit punk and combine them into one potent cocktail. Angry Songs for Young Lovers can, as the title suggests, get a little misogynist at times but heartbreak can certainly make a man bitter. But so can the been there, heard that style of punk rock rehashing. Luckily, The Convulsions only have heartbreak to make them angry. (CK)

DANCE HALL CRASHERS – THE LIVE RECORD, CD

One day the "Crashers", as only their closest friends refer to them, thought that they had enough of this studio bullshit and decided that the live show was where they really shined. Plus, it was a great excuse to get Adrian Tomine, one of the best illustrators in the world, to draw a cover for them. And why not? He lives in their town. They probably know him from back in the good ole days or third wave ska. I mean, all the rest of their album covers look like crap, so might as well have one good record to show the folks, right? I never really thought I liked this band until I heard this, but I was mistaken. They're tight and catchy and totally solid. I really like what they're doing. Plus they kick No Doubt's ass in every way possible, which is always a good thing, and not all that hard to do I guess. Maybe that isn't

saying much. Oh well. For the uninitiated, DHC is fronted by two talented girls on the mics (who talk good shit), backed by boys who play energetic ska-punk. The only problem I have with this is the length. TWENTY FIVE SONGS (only one cover)! Was that really necessary? Did they just get carried away? Whatever the reason, this is a great live record and a good sampling of what this band is capable of doing within the whole ska genre. (RE)

DEATH IS YOUR LANGUAGE – 12 SONGS, CD

Let me start by saying this is packaged really well, with a really nicely screen printed cover to the booklet, and the inside cut and pasted like a zine. It also has a very thoughtful two-page article about women's studies and how bullshit "history" ignores most of the accomplishments of women. Aw. apparently guys that play really fast, screamy political hardcore can have hearts. Nice breakdowns, great messages, twelve tracks of those youth crew anthems kids eat up. If you're one of those "posi" kids, you'll dig this for sure. (ES)

DILLINGER FOUR – VERSUS GOD, CD

"Have you heard the Dillinger Four?" "Dude, you have to hear Dillinger Four!" "You haven't heard the Dillinger Four?" For chrissakes, the Dillinger Four Hype Machine has been going full-throttle for awhile now. If you haven't heard these guys or don't like them, you're almost viewed as some kind of freak. Needless to say, Versus God had a lot to live up to in my mind, this being my first introduction to the band. Could this word of mouth be justified? I remained cautiously optimistic. There was no need for caution; D4's reputation is well-earned. This is a phenomenal record. It's not terribly inventive musically, and part of my initial trepidation had to do with my hesitation to like bands that play this sort of thing. But the D4 is hardly a generic band, and all the elements of their songs work really well together. The power and energy of these songs is overwhelming, and you have to love songs with titles like, "Get Your Study Hall Outta My Recess," "Suckers International Has Gone Public" and "Let Them Eat Thomas Paine." Lots of samples in between songs, which I could personally do without, that are reminiscent of Econochrist. This is blazing punk rock that mixes the best of hard core with a melodic edge that makes you want to sing along. (KR)

DISMEMBERMENT PLAN / JUNO – SPLIT, 7"

The Dismemberment Plan lay down a phat groove. The rap is quite impressive indeed. He's *flowin'*. I will definitely play this when I've got lots of honeys up in the place and need to get the party hoppin'. The clever thing is the lyric has a funny tone of political revolution and just knowing what's up in general. This is beautiful and ironic, because it could easily be a top ten hit dance number. If it were about sex it would be on the charts. An in your

a punker Social D. sound...but this could grow on me. (KR)
Vagrant 2118 Wilshire Blvd., #361, Santa Monica, CA 90403.

■ **AVAIL – ONE WRENCH, CD**

See review above.

Fat P.O. Box 193690, San Francisco, CA 94119-3690

AVALAUNCHER – S/T, CD

I was going to say that this sounds like Nomeansno, and then I noticed that they do a Nomeansno cover. Quirky punk that sounds a little like slower Bar Feeders too, with fast, intricate guitar parts and lots of time changes. (NS)
New World Monkey Records, www.avalauncher.com

BACKHAND – MAKING THE DREAM, CD

Goes through the standard e-motions (get it?). There are some moments when it comes together, but something has to be done about the off-key vocals. (DAL)
Flatbroke Productions, PO Box 1048, Goldenrod, FL 32733

■ **BANTAM ROOSTER – BIG MESS, 7"**

See review above.

Flying Bomb Records PO Box 971038, Ypsilanti, MI 48197

BEYOND DESCRIPTION – CHAOS DAYS IN 1992, 7"

This is awesome, thrash-core punk from 1992! Borderline death metal and thrash played at breakneck speeds in a

minute or less per song style. A must have if you miss the glory days or if you want to visit them for the first time. (DM)
Smog Veil PMB 454-774 Mays #10-I.V., NV 89451 USA

BEYOND HUMAN KONTROL – GUNS, DRUGS, BASHINGS AND A TALE OF SUSPECT COPS, CDEP

Three tracks of metal-heavy rock in the vein of antichrists Korn and Limp Bizkit, just a little heavier. These guys are from Australia, and they say they're hardcore-maybe it's different down there. (KR)
BHK, P.O. Box 793, Noble Park, Vic Aust 3174.

BLACK DICE – S/T, CD

Um, about 15 songs, only one of which is more than 30 seconds, and it's just a continuation of the others, which are a melodic bursts of noise with various screams. Lots of feedback and occasional crunching bass, and boy does it get old. (KR)
Troubleman Unlimited, 16 Willow St., Bayonne, NJ 07002.

BLACK HEART PROCESSION – THREE, CD

I got into a huge fight with my lame girlfriend today and this is totally making me feel like slitting my throat. Very slow super melancholy-great heroin overdose music. Do you want to party? (MY)
Touch & Go, POB 25520, Chicago IL, 60625

BLESSED LIGHT – FOR LOVE & PRESERVATION, CD
Dark, moody love songs for the jaded romantics of the world. (CK)
Made in Mexico, 1011 Boren Ave # 906 Seattle, WA 98104

BLUE PINE – S/T, CD

Imagine that the (Young) Pioneers started crooning and you'll come close to describing this. Quarky pop songs that are kind of creepy. (RB)
Global Symphonic, 203-1055 w. 13th Ave, Vancouver, BC V6H 1N1

BONFIRE MADIGAN – SADDLE THE BRIDGE, CD

Vocally heavy and but musically understated, this CD uses a variety of instrumentation to escape pigeon-holing. Comparisons are difficult, but the slow drum-machine-produced beats and female vocals remind me of Portishead. (KR)
KRS PMB 418, 120 State St. NE, Olympia, WA, 98501.

BRAIN SURGERY FOR BEGINNERS – COUNTDOWN TO OBLIVION, 7"

Awesome printed cover. Fast, political, screamy, hardcore, breakdowns, chugga chugga = Brain Surgery For Beginners. My personal favorite on this four song 7"? "The Fest Sex I Never Had." Clever, right? (EP)

Deranged Records, P.O. Box 543 Station P, Toronto, ON, M5S 2T1 Canada

REVIEWER SPOTLIGHT: Andy Slob (AS)

Every once in a great while you accidentally get records that just plain out rock. That was the case when I received The Urge's Self-Respect, Manners, and Decency LP from the great German label, Incognito Records. I hardly know a thing about the history of this band, but it appears that, just like many other great bands, they started in England sometime around 1977. Born out of disgust for the current music scene and it's inhabitants, The Urge played some shows and made a few recordings. I don't know if anything was actually released during this time period, but Incognito also put a great three song seven inch from these recordings. But the real kicker is that sometime in the late eighties or early nineties, they went back into the studio to record some of the old tunes and some newer ones producing one kick ass fifteen track album all done up with a new singer since the original had died at this point. The Urge play rock and roll influenced punk rock combining, let's say, Los Angeles period X like riffs with the snarl of the Sex Pistols. Classic songs that still bite to today include "It's Getting on My Nerves", "What's Wrong With Me?", the opening cut, "I'm Ashamed of You". Also includes two cool pro gay songs, the anthemic "Homophobe" and "Feel Like a Transvestite" and a nice time period stab at their Teddy Boy nemesis, "Ted's Only Have Quiffs, Cos Their Hair Won't Spike". The only drawback to this record is the cheesy mohawk drawing on the front. Don't let it scare you away!

Some things that I'm willing to push. Government Issue - Complete History Volume One, Can - Anthology CD, and I've already heard The Chemo Kids - Radiation Generation CD no many times.

face, honest and inventive song that just plain sounds great. I like. I'm also pleasantly surprised by Juno's effort as well. Kind of a power pop bordering on emo, but retains a non-pathetic feel. It's strong, which is so refreshing. What we need these days is conviction, not whining. (Do we ever need whining?) This is a well-rounded split that's short & sweet, has stuff that compliments each other well, and has one heck of a mastering/pressing job behind it to make it leap off the vinyl. Solid. Be on the lookout for this disc. (RB)

EIGHT BUCKS EXPERIMENT - PAYBACK, CD

Take Subpop in like the late '80s like right before Nirvana Broke. That label rawked! Remember the first Fluid Record, or Mudhoney or even Tad- Nirvana Bleach for Christ's sake. Shit, on some of their comps (Subpop 200 anyone?) they even had quirky folk shit. Now lets change the subject to Austin like 1994 Anyone remember the passion and energy of bands like the Lord High Fixers, or the Motards???? I do and so does the Eight Bucks Motherfuckers. This CD is Rawking in a quirky strange multifaceted way. The main appeal for me is the sick, fucked up, derelict singer who sounds like a direct from Satan, pedophile-you got to hear this to understand that one!! If you liked what Subpop once was get this CD and a big issue to shoot up into your ass. Did I fail to mention that the packaging is great? (MY)

THE EXPLOSION, - FLASH FLASH FLASH, CD

First off, props to Jade Tree for putting out a record that is outside of their so-called comfort zone of emo and indie releases. Secondly, props to The Explosion for putting out a

release that has already progressed a lot from their rather generic debut EP. First thing, what is up with their obsession with tarantulas and pirates? Sure we all went through our tarantula and pirate phase when we were young, but this is ridiculous. The song "Tarantula Attack" is, I'm sure, a long lost Misfits song in disguise. Think about it, the insect theme, attacking, it just makes sense. All joking aside, this record is really catchy. Every song stands alone and kicks ass. Punk rock that's just meant to sing along and have fun to. Okay, back to the joking. "Flash Flash Flash", I foresee, is going to pave the way for unity in the punk scene. Skinheads will pick up a Promise Ring record and find their sensitive side. Whiny emo geeks will pick up The Explosion and remember what it was like to actually have a good time at a real punk rock show. I have a dream, and it involves a lot of hugging and a lot of fists in the air, all in the name of good clean fun ... oh wait, that is another band entirely. (RE)

FIELDS OF FIRE - THE KIDS CAN'T BE BOUGHT, 7"

I had wanted to hear this band based on descriptions I had heard and lo and behold, here they are in my grubby mitts! This 7" didn't disappoint. I like this band. Almost as much as I like the music, I like the aesthetics of this band. I like that there are bands like this and Life's Halt and No Reply and What Happens Next? and Dead Nation who don't look and sound like all the other cookie cutter hardcore bands that were around a couple years ago. These guys aren't covered in athletic gear. There are no collegiate block letter fonts. The singer has long hair (and looks like a girl). I'm just kidding, but I'm not saying that for

BRAINS NO MORE - RIGHT TO BE ANGRY, CD

If you cross The English Dogs (think Mad Punks era) with Chaos UK and tighten up the slop you will come damn close to Brains No More. This is very catchy Brit Punk styled Hardcore from Holland. There are 16 songs on this- they are all ferocious. I usually like to get all long winded in these highlight reviews but the first line of this review sums this up. Very good stuff. (MY)

X-treem, Leo Zeilmakersstraat 20-b1, 3025 NW Rotterdam
The Netherlands

BROKEN - RUSH HOUR, CD

Fast, tough sounding HC punk from former members of the Pist and Baltimore Foot Stompers. These guys are street punks still going after the cops, college kids, posers and being a wage slave. Thick and rough around the edges kind of punk with breakdowns. (DM)

Coldfront Records, PO Box 8345 Berkeley, CA 94707

CADILLAC BLINDSIDE - READ THE BOOK SEEN THE MOVIE, CD

Fifty-three minutes of mostly feedback. The sort of thing that makes the cat leave the room. (CK)

Soda Jerk, PO Box 4056 Boulder, CO 80306

CANDY SNATCHERS - SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST EP

I hate 2 song Ep's especially when one is a cheesy David Bowie cover. The first song rawks in a Murder City Devils sort of way with wide ranging vocals. (MY)

Cold Front, POB 8345, Berkeley CA, 94707

CHEERLEADERS OF THE APOCALYPSE/HOCUS - SPLIT 7"

Both bands share a penchant for semi slow, brooding, grind-core with the typical over the top gruff vocalizations. Great song titles for your parents to find in your collection. (AS)

Scorched Earth Policy, Augartenstrasse 15, 68165 Mannheim, Germany

CHERRY THIRTEEN - LOWER CLASS ANGELS, 7"

Rockin' straight-ahead punk similar to Social Distortion but with more of an rock edge like Fu Manchu or something. Raspy vocals like Rocket from the Crypt's...not bad. (KR)

Coldfront Records, P.O. Box 8345, Berkeley, CA 94707.

CHUBB - FROM US TO YOU, CD

Painfully silly alternapop, with some good fast sections and funny Canadian vocals. I like the production: slick, but not too slick. (AE)

Pop Culture Records, 7326 Rideau Valley Dr., Kars, Ontario
K0A 2E0, Canada

THE CLOSE - 20,000+, CD

Feeble, feeble, feeble indie rock with feminized dorky male vocals and a slow pathetic happy beat. No bueno!(MY)

Moodswing 3833 Roswell road suite 104, Atlanta GA, 30342

COFFIN CHEATERS - LOOSE AS A \$2 WHORE, 7"

Adolescent themes of booze and sex permeate this seven song platter of a budget basic crossing of Nashville Pussy and the Dwarves. Unprotected sex is preferred? Go for it! (AS)

Sell Your Soul Records, P.O. Box 6113, Mpls, MN 55406

COFFIN CHEATERS - AND WE ARE GOD!, 7"

Fast, snotty punk with plenty of attitude and swearing. I checked the address to see if this was maybe a Meatmen side project because the singer sounds like Tesco Vee. Some song titles are "I Wanna Kill You Fuckers" and "I Wanna Fuck Your Shit." Oh, my stars! (NS)

P.O. Box 6113, Minneapolis, MN 55406

CONGRESS - STAKE THROUGH THE HEART, CD

It's like death metal straight edge all done up in a contemporary hardcore style. Christian? Satanic? Hardline? Hard to tell, but extremely revengeful nonetheless. (AS)

Good Life Recordings, PO Box 114-8500, Kortrijk, Belgium

REVIEWER SPOTLIGHT: Art Ettinger (AE)

A little known fact about the pop sensation the Backstreet Boys is that they were originally called the Backstreet Kids until they found out there was a Skrewdriver song called "Backstreet Kids." There's an Antisocial song called "Backstreet Boys," but the pop band still doesn't know about it. What does this discussion have to do with the Anti-Heros from Atlanta? Absolutely nothing. And nothing can explain why the Anti-Heros aren't way more popular than they are. My classic pick of the month is the Anti-Heros' debut full-length, "That's Right!" Things are different today, but the first Oi record I heard wasn't by Cocksparrer and it wasn't by Blitz. It was by the Anti-Heros. And it forever changed my musical tastes. Still available on vinyl and on CD (with their great second LP), this record will kick your ass. The vocals are absolutely quintessential Oi, and the music rages forward from song to song. Words can't describe the brilliance of the first two songs on Side 2, "He's a Skin" and "I'm Hungry." The lyrics are all about standing apart from others, being true to one's self, and trying to have fun without stepping on others' toes. Bands that sing songs about being an alienated kid are a dime a dozen, yet the Anti-Heros managed to create a real punk rock classic with "That's Right!" There's been a tremendous backlash against this band that probably started a good 15 years ago, but they're not the right-wing thugs they've been made out to be. I guess a band has to have anti-nazi lyrics in ALL of their songs to meet the P.C. kids' standards. I firmly believe that no record collection is complete without "That's Right!" I also highly recommend their second, third, fourth, and live albums. Despite the Oi boom of the past five years, this band remains underappreciated. They won't be around forever. Check 'em out while you can still catch 'em live!

Other records I've been into lately are the final F.Y.P. full-length, the Broilers LP, and anything on Helen of Oi!

fear of getting beat up by these guys. I think the current state of hardcore is in good shape because of bands like this. But onto the music. Well, it's fast. It's melodic. It has some singing and some yelling. There are some punk parts that give the songs some diversity. They have more in common with Minor Threat and Uniform Choice than the '88 style bands. I look forward to hearing more from these guys. (NS)

FUN PEOPLE - FEDERRICK GOES TO JAPAN...WITH THE FUN PEOPLE, CD

I don't know much about these maniacs from Argentina, but this is a masterpiece! This thing's HUGE—35 songs in an hour. The lyrics are in English, but the accent is real strong. The vocalist sings like he knows he's hilarious and runs with it. Snuffy Smile sure knows how to find the nuttiest bands. The lyrics aren't easy to follow, adding to the charm. Check out the lyrics for "Jailed," a particularly stumping ditty: "the passion for my freedom broken by law one day, one night, one victim, screaming for one fun, one law, one crime screaming for one skate, one boy, one love screaming for screaming for your life!" There's even a song called "Skateboard from Hell" that's NOT an MDC cover! There are lots of hardcore and metal sections in otherwise poppy songs. It's Cindy Lauper meets hardcore after attending a late 80's Dead Milkmen show. There's enough here to please everyone, but fans of Fat Day or Stikky should pay special attention due to the sheer silliness of it all. I love this!!! (AE)

THE FUSES - ARE LIES, CD

Take all the finest elements of the Clash, The Undertones, Angelic Upstarts speed them up and add the vocals for Social Unrest (Rat in a Maze) combined with Adam Ant (Beat Me) Put these different elements in school. A class to educate them for a time travel adventure to the year 2000. The Fuses pop out of the time capsule cool like Kool-Aid, fresh & crisp. Get this, it comes highly recommended for being cool beginning to end, I can't wait to see them live. (MY)

GARRISON - A MILE IN COLD WATER, CD

Who the hell is Garrison? I'm vaguely familiar with Rev's catalogue, but I had never heard of these guys. Because I had nothing to go on, I looked at the design of the record itself before I had a chance to pop it in. I know you're not supposed to judge a book by its cover, but generally, the design of a record will tell you something, and it especially acts as a barometer to how emo a band is. If you have a record with a picture of a snowy landscape on the cover, watch out, and get the Kleenex. But the design of A Mile in Cold Water didn't put me on edge or play to my own idiotic preconceptions. And I'm happy to report the music proved to be quite good. The problem with bands that often—and erroneously—get labeled emo is that at some point, they seem get castrated. The power disappears. But A Mile in Cold Water keeps its edge and maintains its power. It's stylish enough to not be pedantic and varied enough to avoid too many songwriting formulas. The influence of punk

■ THE CONVULSIONS - ANGRY SONGS FOR YOUNG LOVERS, CD

See review above.

Blitztone Records, no address, go to www.convulsions.homestead.com

COPPERPOT JOURNALS - S/T, CDEP

Melodic emoish punk in the vein of bands like Horace Pinker, Samiam and a bit o' Jimmy Eat World. The production could be better, but musically intriguing with strong vocals-good stuff. (KR)

Blind Bear Records, P.O. Box 309, Leeds, LS2 7AH, UK.

CORRUPT CITIZEN - UNINVITED, CD

Quality alternative rock with a hardcore bend and twist that give Corrupt Citizen an edge over their peers who compose uneventful and unmelodic tunes. The first 2 songs are keepers! (AS)

Sunset Alliance, P.O. Box 31596, Phoenix, AZ 85046

THE COURT AND THE SPARK - VENTURA WHITES, CD
Good quality, laid back alternative country is done up on this platter which turned out great for a lazy Sunday mid morning. I guess that they meant to send it to that No Depression fanzine or something. (AS)

Tumult, PO Box 642371, San Francisco, CA 94164-2371

CROSS MY HEART - TEMPORARY CONTEMPORARY, CD

Seeing this CD set off every emo alarm in my head, but I was pleasantly surprised. While lyrically emo, Cross My Heart maintains some guts for the most part and stay musically interesting and powerful a la Sunny Day Real Estate. (KR)

Deep Elm Records, P.O. Box 36939, Charlotte, NC 28236.

■ DANCE HALL CRASHERS - THE LIVE RECORD, CD

See review above.

Pink & Black PO Box 190516, San Francisco, CA 94119

THE DEACONS - GREETINGS FROM BROOKLYN, 7"

Four songs of decent old school punk/Oi!. What you see is what you get. (BJM)

Cobra Records, no address given

DEAD BOYS - BURIED GEMS, 7"

Two track single of the Dead Boys from 1978 and 1980. The A-side features a ripping rendition of the Adam Faith classic "It's All Right" but without Stiv. The B-side is a rather weak period of the Dead Boys. (EA)

Coldfront Records PO Box PO Box 8345 Berkeley, CA 94707

■ DEATH IS YOUR LANGUAGE - 12 SONGS, CD

See review above.

P.O. Box 15585, Richmond, VA 23220

DEATH OF MARAT/HALF VISCONTE - SPLIT, 7"

If you think these bands' names were pretentious, you oughtta check out their music! I'd say more, but this record really confused me. (AE)

This Argonaut Records, 407 E. Roosevelt, Phoenix, AZ 85004

DED BUGS - SONGS FOR THE POSSESSED AND INSANE, CD

With songs like "How Come You Dont Barf With Me Anymore?", "We Like Girls", and "Evil All Night" and punk names like D-A-V-E, and Jeff "Devulheyd" Bug you know it has to be good. And by good, I mean bad. I promised myself I wouldnt hit the delete buttun tonte. OH, yeahs someone should tell these guys they donthave to pront their lyrics. (RE)

The Pest Club, 318 Stewart, De Soto, MO 63020

DEWEY DEFEATS TRUMAN - B-SIDES, RARITIES, AND OUT-TAKES, CD

This is a power pop, indie trio from Southern California. Kind of guitar rock stuff like Superchunk with dual vocals

REVIEWER SPOTLIGHT: Brian Czarnik (BC)

Being raised on punk in my twenties in Chicago in the early 90's means that I had to love Naked Raygun. I first learned of this band a tad too late. They had already lost guitarist John Haggerty (Pegboy), and were on their way out when I got to see them live (they worked the crowd like no other) a few times. But they did leave us with some great records, and one of the best punk records of all time in "Throb Throb." This record (actually I own both the cassette and vinyl) is a power punch from the first song to the last. The buzzing bass of "Rat Patrol" starts of this punk epic. This song would have been a top ten hit in a perfect punk world. "Surf Combat" keeps things a rolling. "Leeches" is a cult favorite with the chant "Let them live!" carved into my brain. Jeff Pazatti and the boys were a part of one of the nations most underrated punk bands in their time. Why couldn't the rest of the world know Chicago's best-kept secret? I guess that is why we loved them so and wore their band shirts every day we went to see a punk show. Anyhow back to the tape. Side two kills you with a chanting anthem "I Don't Know." When the line "what poor gods we'll make" comes in you really get the feel of utter chaos in ones mind. And the sexy songs "Libido and "No Sex" really tell the true story of a punks love life. The best usage of a saxophone since David Bowie appears on "Only In America." There are so many cool lyrical lines on this disc and some of the most powerful bass/guitar work you'll want to hear. Well, to say that this record kicks as is a true understatement. Get it on c.d. today and thank me tomorrow. This is punk music.. Hell, great music at its best!

Current Favorites: Queen "hits", Journey "hits", The Revolting Cocks musical catalog and the Tampa Bay's Theatre showing of "Young Frankenstein"

and hardcore is readily apparent in what you hear, just like it was with Garrison's since-broken-up label mates, Texas is the Reason. The lineage from Texas to Garrison is quite obvious, and Garrison fills the big shoes left by Texas competently. (KR)

GC5 - KISSES FROM HANOI, CD

This shit is so damn catchy it hurts. I've never been a huge fan of the street/ punk/ Oi! type of thing except some of the Utters stuff and the some of the Murphy's and the Ducky Boys, but Christ these guys fucking rock. I always understood the equation to make a good street band, but these guys fucking rock my socks off. The GC5 write songs with a whole lot of heart and a lot of crunch in this album. You can really feel these guys and where they're coming from in their songs. GC5 has got all the hooks, good backing vocals and sing-alongs, great production down perfectly. This is a solid release. There's a real old school feel to this CD. I listened to this three times in a row so I could sing a long with this CD. Fuck, I even took out the old air guitar once or twice. It would be a real shame if this record doesn't become a classic. If it doesn't, those who know about GC5's Kisses From Hanoi will be listening to this for a while. (DM)

HOSTILE OMISH - OLDE ORDER OF OMISH, CD

There was a time back in the late eighties when nearly every city in the US was afflicted with so called punk bands that somehow seemed to be metal, punk, and thrash all at the same time. Hostile Omish remind me of this time period. Simple punk thrash songs that

are only held together by some retarded sense of scatological humor. This CD supposedly contains the music from four demo tapes made in the late eighties all of which were rerecorded in 1999. While all of the 27 songs are tightly played and well recorded (although a better guitar tone would have helped immensely), they lack the spontaneity that was, hopefully, on the originals warranting this release. Bands, please, never rerecord as 9.99 times out ten everyone prefers the originals. So if song titles like "Lizard Up My Butthole" or "Who Put Sea Monkeys In Mom's Douche?" perk your interest. Go for it. I give 'em credit for growing mustaches just to complete the Amish look, I hope. (AS)

IRAN - S/T, CD

Bands who use white noise and feedback as their primary source of instrumentation get on my nerves. I can't listen to that stuff without wanting to cover my ears and run around screaming at the top of my lungs. As the first few seconds of Iran's disc began to play, I moved my finger closer to the stop button...but then pulled away. Yes, it was noisy. Yes, it had copious amounts of feedback. But I heard more coming from behind all of the mess. Listening to Iran is like looking through a well-work sketchbook...beyond the uneven lines and unintelligible scribbles, pieces of the concept begin to emerge and you suddenly see the unfinished idea. These ideas are inside the songs of Iran, hiding behind the fuzziness...snippets of songs, a series of chords, a few bars sung, all peering from the background. What sounds like an unfinished work is presented as complete and what promised to be unlistenable proved itself to be true art. (CK)

but not as noisy or as whiney. Danceable and fun for the kids. This is a soundtrack to a good time. (DM)

Silver Girl Records, PO Box 161024 San Diego, CA 92176

■ DILLINGER FOUR - VERSUS GOD, CD

See review above.

Hopeless P.O. Box 7495, Van Nuys, CA 91409-7495.

■ THE DISMEMBERMENT PLAN / JUNO - SPLIT, 7"

See review above.

Score disc, PO Box 35221, 08080 Barcelona, Spain

DISASSOCIATE - IMPERFECT WORLD, CD

Harsh grind, but with punk melodies. The vocals are very throaty and a little fuzzy, almost inhuman sounding. Mix His Hero Is Gone with the sound of a dentist's drill. (NS)
M.I.A. Records 315 Church St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10013

DROPKICK MURPHYS - LIVE ON A FIVE, 5"

Volume four of Headache Records "Live on a Five" series features two songs by the Dropkick Murphys of Boston on a five inch record. Straight ahead street punk rock. If you like the genre, you've probably heard of them by now. (BJM)
Headache Records, PO Box 204, Midland Park NJ 07432

EGON / THE SEARCH FOR SATURNALIA - SPLIT, 7"

They sound like each other. Both bands play really long

indie rock songs that seem like they could be a bit shorter. This is kind of like Modest Mouse in some ways, ways that I may not have the power to appreciate fully... but not too bad. (DM)

Has Anyone Ever Told You? PO Box 161702 Austin, TX 78716-1702

■ EIGHT BUCKS EXPERIMENT - PAYBACK, CD

See review above.

No Address

ELLIOTT - FALSE CATHEDRALS, CD

Whoa, this is the most expensive-looking CD layout I've seen yet this year. Primarily slow-tempoed power pop similar to the Weakerthans and Radiohead that works pretty well but can drag after awhile. (KR)

Revelation P.O. Box 5232, Huntington Beach, CA 92615-5232.

THE ENKINDELS - CAN'T STOP THE ENKINDELS, CD

I didn't like their former self: a bland emo band. Then I didn't like their later incarnation: rock stars. Now I don't like their new invention: poppy emo losers. They're muting and whining about girls. (RB)

Initial Records, PO Box 17131, Louisville, KY 40217

ERIC MINGUS - UH.. UM.. ER... , CD

Spoken word over tribal, funk, electronic, jazz, and other

"coffee house" styles of music. Interesting, with his storytelling poetry-like songs, in a NYC café poetry hour kind of way. (ES)

No contact info given.

■ THE EXPLOSION - FLASH FLASH FLASH, CD

See review above.

Jade Tree 2310 Kennwynn Rd, Wilmington, DE 19810

FALL OUT - KILLING TIME, CD

Poppy, new-school California punk to which you might want to skate. A bit of the old ska/punk thrown in as well. (BJM)
Psyko Records, PO Box 1270, Hermosa Beach CA 90254

■ FIELDS OF FIRE - THE KIDS CAN'T BE BOUGHT, 7"

See review above.

New Leaf Records, xbenedgex@hotmail.com

FIFTEEN - HUSH, CDEP

Fifteen is still serving up its brand of socially charged pop-punk, but it doesn't do it for me like it used to. Three songs and nothing really sticks out, though "MRR" will surely leave anti-MRR factions snickering. (KR)

Sub City, P.O. Box 7495, Van Nuys, CA 91409.

REVIEWER SPOTLIGHT: Brian J. Manning (BJM)

Three years ago, Sony re-released the Stooges' third album, *Raw Power*, re-mixed by Iggy Pop. This time, the record was done right: the bass was way up in the mix, and the album kicked ass like it should have in the first place. But before the Stooges recorded *Raw Power*, they did a record called *Funhouse*, which is more blues, more jam, and more soul than their third masterpiece. The songs on *Funhouse* go on longer; there are only seven of them, and six of them are solid. (The last track, "LA Blues," is a cacophony of noise). *Funhouse* opens with the repetitive riffing of "Down on the Street," a laid-back grooving song on which Iggy Pop improvises vocally. Then, from the straight ahead punk rock of "Loose," to the slow, dark, blues jamming of "Dirt," to the hypnotic rhythm section groove of "1970," *Funhouse* rocks like few albums have since. The songs are all less structured and more jam-oriented than other Stooges' songs due to the strong blues influence. With this record, Iggy Pop reinvented the blues in his own language. The result is a truly new form of rock. This is something that few bands manage nowadays. Another element that sets the record apart is the use of a saxophone on three songs. The instrument is uncommon in rock music of this style, but it really adds a rock and roll kick. The guitar and sax play off one another while soloing, and the constant improvisation again reflects the blues. Although it does not approach the sub-par sound of the original *Raw Power*, the one problem with the record is the production. It is very low-fi, which gives it its own character, but it could sound a lot better while retaining its low fidelity. Unfortunately, the bass drum is not nearly loud enough, and the mix would benefit from a low-end boost. Still, though, the raw power of *Funhouse* proves unmatched by anyone else.

Lately, I have been listening to the new self-titled Bob City CD on Derailleur Records.

KIDNAP - '79-'85, CD

This is a great package: you get a classic, rip-roarin' compilation CD, a photo/flier fold out spread, and a history lesson. In 1984 the French punk scene was fracturing as neo-Nazis became a huge, unwanted, but undeniable presence in the scene. At the 2nd annual Chaos Festival, at the height of the schism, "Kidnap, both carefree and refusing to be threatened, defiantly play NO SS to the Sieg-heiling members of the audience, while dodging beer bottles hurled at the stage." What incredible, powerful music. French lends itself to punk vocals better than you might think it would. And the song "J.R." attacked Johnny Rotten for "how he betrayed the punk movement" 15 years before the Filthy Lucre Tour. (DAL)

KILNEMIA/FALLEN - SPLIT, CD

Kilnemia is easily one of the catchiest new school HC bands I have heard-Fuck-I made a tape for my car. Imagine for a second Jon Brannon (more Laughing Hyenas less Negative Approach) screaming over the guitars of Indecision put together in a melodic mid-tempo Grade manner. Beware this goes back and forth melodic/Hardcore-not as bad as Korn not quite as good as Converge. Now before you rush down and demand this platter, it is my duty to alert you that these individuals suffer from a grave illness that may cause you to turn your backs on them, but please find it in your heart to pity them that disease is the dreaded scourge known as Christianity. They voice their love for Jesus in every song and is it BOLD-Check this out: "Let me not exist in myself let me exist in you" Fallen plays in

a monotone fashion. There is a sense of energy but it does little to change the inherent stagnant nature of this (possible) lion food. (MY)

KLASSE KRIMINALE - ELECTRIC CARAVANAS, CD

When I think of Italy I think of fun people, fun food, fun films, and the most fuckin' fun Oi band on the planet. In comes Klasse Kriminale, with their latest classic album. Pause the Fulci flick in your VCR, drop the pasta, and get dancing!!! I don't wear boots, but maybe I oughtta start. From the cute-as-hell punks and skins adorning the insert to the last note on track twelve, this is the feel-good release of the year. Actually, I'm no Klasse Kriminale historian, but I think this is a couple of years old. But only now is it getting a North American release. For the uninitiated, Klasse Kriminale's been around forever. They play slightly slower-than-average Oi anthems, with non-macho vocals and a heavy ska influence. The backing vocals are more sung than shouted, adding a unique quality distinct from most of the world's Oi. The lyrics are all translated on the lyric sheet, and are surprisingly playful. Who can't relate to the universal truth that "no one becomes a great football player a karate teacher or a rock 'n' roll star?" Punks and skins and everyone else should embrace this band. 100% super. (AE)

KRONSTADT UPRISING - INSURRECTION, CD

First off, I will say that I have never heard of this band who existed in Britain between 1981 to 1987. They started out as a simplistic punk band, similar in style and content to early

THE FLYING LUTTENBACHERS - ALPTRAUM, CD

Chaotic noise with a cello, drums sax, and other instruments. All recorded in various Chicago clubs. (BC)

Pandemonium B.P. 64- 13192 Marseille Cedex 20- France

FOREVER EINSTEIN - DOWN WITH GRAVITY, CD

Instrumental music with no real specific sound or feel. There are some surfy undertones, some mathy parts, but overall it's really hard to follow. (RE)

Cuneiform Records, PO Box 8427, Silver Spring, MD 20907-8427

THE FUCK YOU UPS - FUCK CITY BABY, 7"

Messy, poorly recorded punk rock drivel. How many times can you say "fuck" on one seven inch? (CK)

Formula 13, PO Box 7385 Tempe, AZ 85281-0013

■ FUN PEOPLE - FEDERRICK GOES TO JAPAN...

See review above.

Snuffy Smile, 4-1-16-201 Daita, Setagaya-ku, Tokyo 155-0033, Japan

THE FUSES - ARE LIES, CD

See review above. (MY)

Reptilian, 403 S. Broadway, Baltimore MD, 21231

F.Y.P - COME HOME SMELLY, 7"

Chances are, you already know who F.Y.P. are. It's also pos-

sible that you own one or more of their six or so albums. But just in case you don't, F.Y.P. were a couple of old skate kids that played good ol' punk rock and inspired many to do the same. They played their last show some time in June, and I believe are starting a new band... This eight song EP is filled with those sing-a-long punk rock anthems that make the skaters and pop punkers smile. (ES)

Theologian P.O. Box 1070, Hermosa Beach, CA 90254

■ GARRISON - A MILE IN COLD WATER, CD

See review above.

Revelation P.O. Box 5232, Huntington Beach, CA 92615-5232.

■ THE GC5 - KISSES FROM HANOI, CD

See review above.

Outsider, PO Box 92708 Long Beach, CA 90809

GIVE UNTIL GONE - SETTLED FOR THE ART OFFICIAL, CD

Listener-friendly quality indie/emo, but nothing that hasn't been done before. (CK)

Dimmak, PO Box 14011 Santa Barbara, CA 93107

GLORIUM - PSYKLOPS, 7"

A two song single where I hear influences of any number of "post-punk" bands. The production is solid; the guitars sound good and all the instruments are clear and up in the

mix. The first song sounds like the Velvet Underground in the beginning before drawing the listener in with a repetitive bass line. The second song is harder, with dissonant guitar parts and a greater sense of urgency. (BJM)

Tranquillity Base Records, PO Box 184, Bryn Mawr PA 19010

GREY AM - WITH MATCHES LIT, CD

Good production highlights this post hardcore, six song effort that is surprisingly catchy based on other things that are comparable in nature. (AS)

Law Of Inertia, 206A Dryden Road, Suite 154, Ithaca, NY 14850

HACKSAW - S/T, CD

Average Rock And Roll band that rarely if ever Rawks-Very strict formula adherence. Common, they have probably been doing classic rock covers for years. (MY)

No Address

HAPPY DAGGER - S/T, 7"

Pretty basic hardcore with a positive message. Contains a paragraph or so explaining each song, which is a nice touch. (CK)

Bleeding Parade Inc, PO Box 5791 San Diego, CA 92165-5791

REVIEWER SPOTLIGHT: Courtney Knox (CK)

It is profoundly difficult to talk about Joy Division and their classic album "Substance" without the words getting in the way. As Jon Savage so eloquently wrote, "Joy Division attempted that ambiguous concept, a modern classicism; in that they succeeded, their songs continue to fascinate from within their own time." Joy Division may have been inspired by the punk uprisings around them, but what they did with their instruments and front man Ian Curtis did with his voice seemed to come from another time and place altogether. What they created on Earth in England in the late 70s had to have been created as Bernard Sumner once said by, "plucking out of the air." The darkness, the other-worldliness, the emotion that comes from their music are elements that were formed on another plane and went back home with Ian Curtis on the day he died.

Lately, I've been listening to: Death Cab for Cutie - ...We're Voting Yes, Sunny Day Real Estate - The Rising Tide, and Travis - The Man Who.

Crass, and even appeared on a Crass Records comp album, and eventually mutated into a post punk rock band, although still sounding mostly punk, like the Lords of the New Church. I find it funny that out of the five different lineups of Kronstadt only the drummer remains constant. He was also the major songwriting force in the band. The sad part is that not much of this has remained fresh sounding as the years have worn on. The simple punk sound employed while, when new, was engaging, it lacks some of the power of their contemporaries from the same time period. The necessity of this release seems to be for diehard Crass and English punk fans, but I can't stop thinking about whether it was issued for the love of the music or as an attempt to cash in. And I just can't seem to forgive them for doing too many songs, but not most, that border the four minute mark. (AS)

LES SAVY FAV - ROME, CD

Southern Records seems to be on top of things these days, plucking bands from obscure labels and pushing them out to the indie masses where they belong. Les Savy Fav still have ties to Frenchkiss Records, but this five song wonder-disc may never have been created without the driving force that is Southern. Les Savy Fav's rhymes are not to be missed ("We've got arms in the armory, facts in the factory, sense in the century"), and neither are the grooves, the blipies and bloopies and the Van Pelt-esque talk/sing vocal stylings. This is one snazzy record by a band to keep an eye on. (CK)

MAN'S RUIN - GOSSIP, RUMORS AND LIES, CD

In the past several years, I've taken to shaving my head. I usually shave with no guard, let the hair grow back till it pisses me off, then I shave it again. For the first time ever

though, I picked up a Bic and shaved all the way. Then this CD appeared in my mailbox the next day. True story, I swear! A sign of some sort? The Helen of Oi! label is kicking ass. They pretty much NEVER put out a crap record, and this is no exception. Finally a second full-length from these Atlanta toughies! Growling female vocals decry the hypocrisy in today's "scenes." Man's Ruin's got the right attitude: there's only so much time to have fun, so don't let the assholes in your town beat you down. The songs are tight, and the lyrics are personal without being embarrassing. And unlike so many Oi bands past and present, Man's Ruin likes it fast. This has got to be the first major Oi band to cover Minor Threat. Rhonda Riot could kick Ian's ass any day! Don't miss out on this great band. (AE)

MANCAKE - WE WILL DESTROY YOU, CD

I cannot believe that this is just NOW getting reviewed. This has been out for way over a year or so. Man, Art Monk must not have their shit together or something. For those of you who are not cool enough to be in the know, Mancake is a force not to be reckoned with. Axe-wielding maniacs with megaphones, blasting heavy spastic post-hardcore. Lots of breakdowns and a singer who sounds like he's trying to shit and sing at the same time. The story goes, they were running out of studio time so the singer decided to make the best of his pre-poop anxiety and record the vocals while actually taking a shit. The band was then named after what he left in the toilet. It was a tough decision, and it came down to either Mancake or Shit 2000, but a quick game of Paper, Rock, and Scissors made the call. This also explains the overall brown look of this album. Mancake takes on hard hit-

HARVEY MILK - COURTESY AND GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN, CD

Really strange and unexpected song structures that go from quiet and atmospheric to loud and screechy and back again. (CK)

Tumult, PO Box 642371 San Francisco, CA 94164 - 2371

THE HATES - S/T, 7"

A Mariachi band with a country twang trying to be punk. Perhaps this record got mixed up at the record plant. The music does not correspond with the Mohicans & spikes on the cover. Limited to 1000. (MY)

No address given hates.iuma.com

HELEN ZACHARIAH - SAVE THE PLANTS, 7"

This pathetic artist is just one you have to laugh at. She's a psycho girl from Wales who is trying to buck all those evil songwriting rules that keep her so confined. I wished this caged bird wouldn't sing. (RB)

NDN P.O. Box 131471, The Woodlands, TX 77393-1471

THE HELGESON STORY - NO MAIL DAYS ARE BAD DAYS, CD

This came with a sticker, which, after listening to this, I promptly put on my car... so you know that's a good thing. This seven song CD is lovely, melodic, flowing, and fans of The Gloria Record, The Promise Ring, or Mineral would probably enjoy this as much as I did. (ES)

Cosmo K Records

HENRY - SOUNDS LIKE, CD

Soft, clean, twangy rock 'n' roll with a country voice that sways toward Calvin Johnson-ish quality now and then. You know, deep and smooth white guy voice. Sounds like they're clamoring to fit the lyric into it sometimes, but I like that. (RB)

Reticulated Records

THE HOODLUMS - HEAVY METAL VOMIT PARTY, CD

Who knew people still played ska? A couple of good songs that have vocals out of '60s soul tunes, but most of the rest are standard genre ditties. One really odd song about abortion. (DAL)

Moniker? No! Records, no address given

■ HOSTILE OMISH - OLDE ORDER OF OMISH, CD
See review above.

Jim Clevo Presentations, Box 110161, Cleveland, OH 44111-0161, USA

HUEVOS RANCHEROS - MUERTE DEL TORO, CD

This band plays bad surf music. But I looked it up, theres no surfing in Canada! A whole lot of bad band names but no surfing. None. At All. Canada sucks. Except the kids I stayed with at More Than Music Fest this year ... those kids rule. (RE)

Mint Records, PO Box 3613, Vancouver, BC Canada

HUNTER-GATHERER/RYDELL - SPLIT CD

Three songs apiece from these neo emocore bands, one British, one American, minus any hardcore intensity, and probably best dealt with in a coffeehouse with some kinda

French named caffeine drink. (AS)

Stickfigure, P.O. Box 55462, Atlanta, GA 30308

HYPNOMEN - TRIP WITH SATAN, CD

Psychedelic pop-garage at its finest and a must for fan of said genre. If I am not mistaken they are Finnish, and I can bet you don't have any Finnish psych/punk/pop in your collection, do you? (EA)

Gearhead PO Box 421219 San Francisco, CA 94142-1219

THE ICARUS LINE - KILL CUPID WITH A NAIL FILE, 7"

Angry, Intense, Furious, and Intense. All four are good words in describing music, and all four can be used here. (BC)

Buddyhead.com

IMBALANCE - S/T, CD

6 songs of British p-rock that gets a tad angry at times in the disc. The artwork on the jacket is some bizarre stuff. (BC)

Hermet Records P.O. Box 309 Leeds, England LS2 7AH

■ IRAN - S/T, CD

See review above.

Tumult, PO Box 642371 San Francisco, CA 94164-2371

J CHURCH - ONE MISSISSIPPI, CD

Another fine product from J Church, 26 tracks of almost perfect pop punk done the right way. The lyrics are always worth it. You should already own this by the time this issue of Punk Planet comes out any ways. (EA)

Honest Don's PO Box 192027 San Francisco, CA 94119

REVIEWER SPOTLIGHT: Dan Laidman (DAL)

The first time I heard the Big Boys, I was a wide-eyed, chipmunk-cheeked 15-year-old poking around Green Hell Records, being a nerdy pest and annoying Thrashhead with my friend Steve. Thrashhead, of Flipside fame, was the punk guru-in-residence, and whenever my friend and I would go in the store and hang out he would always have a classic pick ready to put us to shame for listening to whatever modern drivel we were about to buy. "You want to hear something that will really blow your mind?" One day it was the Big Boys, and I had never heard anything like it. I didn't remember the song or the album or any of the specifics, but it was such a dense, complicated, fast, funky cacophony of rock and roll, I wanted to start dancing like a madman right there in the store, but I had to act cool to impress Thrashhead, so I nodded and said, "Yeah, this is cool." Damn right it's cool. What a brilliant, loveable band, that can make you pump your fists one minute and then conjure up a championship lump in your throat with a beautiful song like "Heartbeat." Check out the compilations "The Skinny Elvis" and "The Fat Elvis" to get the best tunes along with testimonials about the Big Boys' influence from a bunch of punk luminaries. Ian MacKaye writes that when the Big Boys opened for Minor Threat he didn't know how he could go on after them: "More enormous men, decorated jump suits, food props, great songs, a horn section, 200 friends on stage singing and dancing... we were fucked."

Thank God for the new J Church album, it's got 26 songs, praise the Lord! Also, come to Berkeley and check out American Steel.

ting issues like: The Louisiana Purchase, Diversity, Concrete Inhalation, Mancakes, and the Internet. I think they're really onto something. (RE)

MEASELS, THE - ITCH, 7"

You know what I really like about records? (Besides the pretty, colorful and creatively done ones, which I never get, boo hoo.) Reading the inscriptions along the circle in the center. Does that have a technical name? I don't know. This record, although not colored vinyl, says "Jar Jar must die!" so I liked it before I even listened. The Measels play an interesting blend of 60s garage pop, with fun, rocking guitar parts and snappy organ parts similar, at times, to those of the Murder City Devils, who I also love. This is their 2nd 7" single, the A side is "Itch", frenzied, rockin', and lots of fun. The B side is a cover of the Gories' song "View From Here". If you like to rock, and I know that you do, I suggest you pick this up. (ES)

MENSEN/ THE MEAT JOY- SPLIT, 7"

This is a good slab of vinyl here. Two girl fronted (I guess we still have to point out when females sing until the year 2020 when both sexes join as one as a uni-sex nation) bands that seem to be well schooled in rock 101. One band being from DC (The Meat Joy) and the other from Norway (Mensen.) since America is bigger and better we will start with the Norway band first. Mensen does the track "mean Christine." First off give them points

for using the name Christine. With rockers like "Christine 16 (KISS)" and the cool horror flick "Christine (the evil car)" one must be careful that they can do the name justice. And believe me when I say that this band rocks the name Christine like it should be rocked. Guitars blaring and vocals screaming, this is a powerful band. The other side is host to a band that you could get by putting early Blondie and X into a blender with a mad rat. Or try putting Iggy Pop into a toaster while he fucks that singer from No Doubt. Hey, why don't you eat a little shit sandwich with a tad bit of peanut butter and see...where am I going with this? OK back to the 7 inch (and not the one in my shorts), this is something that you should get to make your turntable rock again. This music is a throw back into the late 70's era of rock and roll that was underground. A time where it meant something to be called a rocker or a punk. So now in a time of crappy bands let these two be a little greasy spot of sunshine. (BC)

THE METROS - I GOTTA GO, 7"

Holy Christ, this is a great blast of punk rock - explosion style. The sound on this is way in the red, one thing that their LP and Rip Off single were missing. Maybe it's the pressing, but the song "I Gotta Go" jumps and screams, "Put me on your mix tape." This Detroit five piece have the balls and punch to make you realize that the 2 song rock and

J-MAJESTY - NO TITLE, CD

Jazzy art-punk from the East Coast. Track 8 has chimes on it...man, I really miss early Rush. (BC)

Some 122 West 29th Street 4th Floor, NY, NY. 10001

JIMMY EAT WORLD - SINGLES, CD

Melodic alternative rock/punk that ranges from slow tunes to fast ones. Popular stuff these days in good old Boston. (BC)

BWR 325 Huntington Ave #24, Boston, MA. 02115

JOHN BROWN BATTERY - JINXED, CD

Popular debut full-length from this energetic Chicago-based melodic hardcore band. Like a slower version of Lifetime. First rate. (AE)

He Who Corrupts, 196 Fairfield, Elmhurst, IL 60126

JOHN HOLMES/CANVAS - SPLIT 7"

John Holmes play noisy, chaotic, distorted metal/hardcore. Comparatively, Canvas have a cleaner sound in terms of production, but their music is in strange time signatures and it's slower. They also scream a lot more. While John Holmes is closer to metal, Canvas have more of a math/grind/post-hardcore sound. (BJM)

Devil Rock Records, PO Box 187, Leeds LS6 1LH, UK

JOHN VANDERSLICE - MASS SUICIDE OCCULT FIGURINES, CD

Dumb, jokey self-proclaimed "alternative" vocalist sings over a minimalist college-educated backup band. Well-recorded, though. (AE)

Barsuk Records, PO Box 31016, Seattle, WA 98103

JULIANA THEORY/ONE LINE DRAWING/GREY AM - THREE WAY SPLIT, CD

Three bands apiece doing the emo, alternarock thing all with above average results, I believe, even though it's not my preferred genre, some of which seem strangely familiar or is that plagiarized? 5 songs total. (AS)

One Day Savior Post Office Box 372, Williston Park, NY 11596

JUNTO - A CALL FOR ACTION, CD

This is an extremely political band. The music is dull while it tries to be intense. You are not free, you are a capitalist slave. Just thought I'd tell you so you don't have to hear it from them. (RB)

Consolidated Labour, Box 1168, Elkford, BC V0B 1H0

THE KABINBOY - THE HATED AND THE DEBATED, 7"

Tough Irish instrumentals with hardcore sensibilities. I think it's supposed to be eerie. And that it is. Interesting pair of tracks. (AE)

Dropping Like Flies, 109 Melrose St., Belfast, BT9 7DP, Northern Ireland

KIDNAP - '79-'85

See review above.

Upstart Productions, 65A W. Madison Ave. #254, Dumont, NJ 07628

KILL YOUR IDOLS/THE NERVE AGENTS - SPLIT 7"

KYI play three songs of old school hardcore with snotty vocals. Their first song here has a touch of Oi! to it. The

Nerve Agents also play old school hardcore, but with more gruff, rock and roll-type vocals. KYI cover Scandal, and the Nerve Agents cover Bowie. (BJM)

Mankind Records, PO Box 461, Bellflower CA 90707

KILNEMIA/FALLEN - SPLIT, CD

See review above.

Line Red Records 135 north Fraser Drive, Mesa AZ, 85203

THE KITT Y VERMONT, - WONDERFUL YOU, CD

Quick-moving (i.e., short songs) electronica that immediately made me think of Stereolab. Catchy, but for some reason it sounds to me like a soundtrack to an '80s coming-of-age movie. (KR)

Motorcoat Records, 1818 Sherwood Drive, Beloit, WI 53511

KLASSE KRIMINALE - ELECTRIC CARAVANAS, CD

See review above.

Insurgence, 2 Bloor St. W. Suite 100-184, Toronto, Ontario M4W 3E2, Canada

KRONSTADT UPRISING - INSURRECTION, CD

See review above.

Overground Records, PO Box 1NW, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE99 1NW, England

LEECHMILK - STARVATION OF LOCUSTS, CD

Seven heavy, distorted grindcore songs. (BJM)

Spare Change Records, edmond@mindspring.com or (404) 874-0731

REVIEWER SPOTLIGHT: Eric Action (EA)

Where does one start with the Mighty-Famous-Wild Billy Childish. I couldn't think of one album, let alone band that Billy has done that I would make my "must own". Frankly, when I look at the over 50 full lengths and more singles he has released it is rather overwhelming. Though you can rarely go wrong, here are some of the best to get you started. Start with Thee Headcoats (Billy at his garage best) and pick up the newly released 3xLP or 2xCD "Elementary Headcoats" with 50 songs from numerous singles. Next, pick up Thee Mighty Ceasars "Surely we were the sons..." on Crypt records. Finally, you need to own the Milkshakes "19th Nervous Shakedown", a 30 track retrospective of Billy's 50's twist. I haven't even mentioned other bands like the Pop Rivets, the Blackhands, his solo stuff, or the wonderful girl lead version of Thee Headcoats named Thee Headcoatees. I will guarantee that once you start on this path you will find yourself collecting Billy Childish records for a long time to come. You must check out www.billychildish.com to read the full story and the overbearing discography of all things related to Billy (did I mention he is also a great artist, poet and author!)

Lately, the records that have kept me going: Le Shok - All, Riff Randells - 7", Jerry Lee Lewis - Bear Family 8CD box set (the original Punk rocker) and the new Shellac record (the first track is perfect)

roll single isn't dead. I want a kick ass A-side followed by a quirky B-side that the artist takes a chance on (it's the B-side after all!). The Metros take a chance on side-B in what first appears to be a ballad/ "Lookin' for Danger" that erupts into a full on punker. True 60's punk rock ala Nuggets style, but with the harder edge. I really was blown away by this after finding their LP disappointing. Someone needs to sign them up to do another full length, now. (EA)

THE MIGS - SELF TITLED, CD

The Migs play great, entertaining pop songs in the same vein as The Beatles at their weirder moments or Camper Van Beethoven except that they are set apart by their synth/key-board sounds. All of this is done in crystal clear production and an twisted sense of humor that could possibly pull in the most jaded listener. Damn this thing made me happy, but for those purists, not at all in a punk rock way. This is straight up fun stuff, and the first cut, "Sweet and Sour", could easily become some off the wall top ten hit if the music industry wasn't so corporate driven. The only drawback is the fact that every other song, albeit not bad, is an instrumental, but they go far beyond any typical trite surf band drivel. So give yourself a well deserved break from the buzzsaw guitars or solemn backpacked boredom that you're usually listening to and wiggle your ass down a different freeway with The Migs. Just a touch of advise though, scrappier production and more songs with words would have made this a party favorite. Do you guys even like punk rock? (AS)

MOCK ORANGE - THE RECORD PLAY, CD

Just when you thought the whole emo thing was coming to a close, here comes Mock Orange. This is pretty tight stuff for a band playing rock music in the style of that other band The Get Up Promise Braid Kids Ring. Not to sound like I'm knocking on these guys, but Mock Orange really make their own sound in this style. Decent vocals sung over some pretty moving, toe tapping tunes. A lot of good harmonies and backing vocals make this a really solid two guitar rock band. Just the right amount of slow songs surrounded by faster more up-tempo tracks. It's really not bad at all. The Record Plays is perfect driving music for road trips or something else that involves coffee drinking or something. I'm just trying to say it sets a pretty good mood. That is of course if you like the whole emo thing. (DM)

NATIONAL ACROBAT - FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES, IS DEAD, CD

These guys sound like they'd make for an excellent live show, with the frantic-ness of the vocals and guitars, and the way they play off each other. I like it when bands print lyrics inside the CD booklet, especially when the vocals are sort of screamy (in a slightly off-key, half-talking, Sean McCabe kind of way, of which I am also a fan). My only complaint, aside from the plastic bag do-it-yourself CD assembly kit this arrived in, is that this is a little too short. Just as you really start to get into it, it's over. (ES)

LEGENDS OF RODEO - SOUTH ATLANTIC HYMNS, CD

They've got their stuff together and they can write a catchy pop emo song. Problem is I despise it. Do you? (RB)
Academic Life PO Box 2781, West Palm Beach, FL 33402

LES SAVY FAV - ROME, CD

See review above.

Southern Records, PO Box 577375 Chicago, IL 60657

LOZENG - DOOZY, CD

Weird, eerie noise with an accordion, oboe, mini-moog, sax, and viola, plus regular instruments like guitars and drums. They call it "percussive dysrhythmia". I call it (insert something bad here). (ES)

Toyo PMB 421, 564 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94105

MAD CADDIES - THE HOLIDAY HAS BEEN CANCELLED, CD

Five tunes of mostly radio ready ska punctuated hardcore potentially written by Fat Mike from NOFX except for their ABBA cover (SOS) which pales in emotion to the original. (AS)
Fat Wreck Chords, P.O. Box 193690, San Francisco, CA 94119-3690

MAN'S RUIN - GOSSIP, RUMORS AND LIES, CD

See review above.

Helen of Oil, BP7, 77133 Fericy, France

MANCAKE - WE WILL DESTROY YOU, CD

See review above.

Art Monk Construction, PO Box 6332, Falls Church, VA 22040

MANISH KALVAKOTA - S/T, CD

"Mad Man" Manish adds a touch of India to folk rock with some sitar and tabla accompaniments. This reminds me of Ween or the Frogs, but without the humor. (NS)

Voltage Recordings Box F7, 1000 Smith Level Rd., Carrboro, NC 27510

MASTERS OF THE HEMISPHERE - I AM NOT A FREEMDOOM, CD

Thirteen tracks telling the story of life among the creatures of Krone Ishta. Poppy songs you'd sort of expect to go with something related to a kids' story. (KR)

Kindercore Records, www.kindercore.com.

MATTERHORN - SET TO RISE, CD

Intense Rollins style rock from Oakland, California. Buzzsaw guitar and mad vocals fill up these nine cuts. (BC)

Reptilian 403 South Broadway, Baltimore, MD. 21231

THE MEASELS - ITCH, 7"

See review above.

What Else? Records, P.O. Box 1211, Columbus, IN 47202

THE MEDEA CONNECTION - THE ACTION NOISE, CD

This Boston girl/guy duo play an interesting mix of dirty, old school rocking punk with strange effects. And I don't mean strange in a bad way, but rather, in an eclectic, creative, they know how to mix it up kinda way. (ES)

The Medea Connection, 242 Lexington St. #1, East Boston, MA 02128

MENSEN/THE MEAT JOY - SPLIT, 7"

See review above.

Fandango Records 3403 Mt. Pleasant, NW, Washington, DC 20010

THE MESSY HAIRS - SKULLS AND SKATEBOARDS, 7"

Super-fast punk rock record with a token "we hate cops" song. 100% mindless skate punk in every groove. (CK)

Paco Garden Records, PO Box 18455 Denver, CO 80218-0455

THE METROS - I GOTTA GO, 7"

See review above.

Dirtnap Records PO Box 21249 Seattle, WA 98111

THE MIDNIGHT EVILS - S/T 7"

Fast, loud, heavy, gasoline and beer fueled rock'n'roll. Weird Cookie Monster-like vocals. (ES)

Dart Records, P.O. Box 1843, Fargo, ND 58107

THE MIGS, CD

See review above.

no address, <http://themigs.com>

MIKE TOSCHI - MOCK DEMOCRACY, CD

15 tracks of whisper singing folk music here. The same formula of sing-song style is used with the occasional tempo change or change in singing style. Maybe I'm being too harsh but a lot of the songs sound very similar to each other. (DM)

Global Seepaj Records, 1907 11th Ave. E. Seattle, WA 98102

REVIEWER SPOTLIGHT: Erin Schleckman (ES)

Straight outta Washington, D.C., Minor Threat was one of the most influential hardcore punk bands to grace the planet. With their intense style and youth crew anthems, Minor Threat toured the globe to spread their straight-edge messages to the masses. Ok, that sounded lame, but it's true. Ask almost any kid in the punk community for a list of influential bands, and surely Minor Threat will be on it. While not obscure by any means, with their six releases and several live videos, these guys are sure to be found in nearly any punk kids record crate. If you're just getting into the scene, and want a taste of where it all began, check out "Out Of Step" or one of their other releases.

Tunes that presently tickle my fancy, whatever that means... Le Shok - anything; The Faint - Blank Wave Arcade; Depeche Mode - The Singles; Moods for Moderns - Two Tracks Left, Travis - anything; Paul Van Dyk - Out There and Back.

NINEDAYSWONDER - THE SCENERY IS IN DISGUISE THERE, CD

All you want is at least a couple of discs you get to review to actually blow you away. This one is a winner in that category. Ninedayswonder is an explosion of music. This band from the rocking land of Japan comes on like a hurricane of musical power. Armed with the basic instruments (guitars/drums) they go to war with your ears but remain listenable at the same time. The band mastered the art of being strange but still being likeable at the same time. you will get to know their tunes and be familiar with the choruses etc... something that you can't always do with these experimental type of bands. The rhythms that the songs carry in them are very powerful to say the least. I love Jesus Lizard and stuff like that but also love to hear pop stuff like Jellyfish and Material Issue. This band seems to satisfy all my musical urges in their nine songs here. Maybe they don't get that sugar-pop sound, but it gets poppy enough for this style. This is a very god and interesting disc. I would be interested in seeing how this band grows and if they will get the large American audience they deserve. (BC)

NO REPLY - S/T, 7"

This is one of those records where the band's front-man writes a little mini-essay under the lyrics of each of the songs on the sleeve. In the first essay, following the great song "I'm Still Fucking Pissed," our friend writes: "I will never be ashamed to say that I own hardcore regardless of what snobby assholes at Punk Planet say. I'm fucking pissed and proud." Well, guess what, guy? This snobby Punk Planet asshole fuckin' LOVED your 7"! So there. No bad review for you. In fact, I haven't heard a better hardcore single in years. This thing has 9 SONGS on a 7", and it's not death metal or crust or grindcore.

Just short and fast oldschool hardcore. The lyrics are intelligent, and poke fun both at people who take themselves too seriously as well as at people who don't give a shit. This band's attacks on the scene stem from true love for yet another sector of punk that's plagued by in-fighting. These guys believe in simplicity— each song has one or two parts, with repetitious lyrics. And while I'm pretty sure they're an edge band, there's not a hint of preachiness. Historically, fast, straight-forward hardcore has attracted those looking to escape the complacency of slower music. These guys are from LA, but it's classic NYHC. It's folks like this who keep older sounds alive. This one will bring back joyous memories to anyone weaned on hardcore. Maybe it'll even wean a few new kids looking for an out. (AE)

POINT / ANYWAY - SPLIT, 7"

This is quite a pleasant surprise to receive. It's not too often you get something that blows you away. On this split, Anyway comes off as the champion of the split. They have a late 80's, early 90's DC sound plus a whole lot more. They play a really aggro style of music that comes off as quite tight and then is ready to explode. Anyway is very impressive as a band and will probably get a lot of recognition if they keep up the same energy. Point is also quite good. They have more of an indie punk approach to their music. Point has these somewhat spacey vocals over mid to high tempo songs. They too have a bit of a DC feel to them as well but more of a straight forward rock approach. This two song each split is really rad and worth tracking down. (DM)

MINMAE - LUCY IN THE SKY WITH DNA HELIXES, CDEP

Slow and drony, vocals buried in the mix, I'm not sure if this is trying to sound like bands such as Tortoise or Slint, but it's not working. The songs have long build-ups and long plateaus, but neither held my interest. (KR)
Dogprint, P.O. Box 2120, Teaneck, NJ 07666.

■ MOCK ORANGE - THE RECORD PLAY, CD

See review above.

Lobster Records, PO Box 1473, Santa Monica, CA 93102

MOLOKO PLUS - RUNNING ON EMPTY, CD

Smooth & polished good-boy "punk." Twelve for ten cents. Wayne: Oh, don't you mean 'a dime a dozen?' Cassandra: Maybe where you come from. (RB)
206 W. Grand, Carterville, IL 62918

THE MOON & SIXPENCE - SELF TITLED, 7"

Hey, it's a raw emo type band with some slight blues and 60's garage influence on at least two of the three cuts. (AS)

Uncarved Block #1, POB 3195, Danapoint, CA 92629

THE MOVIE LIFE/ EX NUMBER FIVE SPLIT CDEP

High pitched snotty vocals over slow driving indie rock with good lyrics. The 2nd band is totally bland with no hooks, soul, beat, or value! 2 songs by each band. (MY)
One Day Savior POB 372, Williston Park NY, 11596

MR. ENTERTAINMENT AND THE POOKIE SMACKERS - 1926 FUNSTOWN STREET, CD

Exploring the realms of art rock recorded all in a house. This has a goofy feel and a lot of toy piano played on the songs. (BC)

Ho-Town Records mistere@bellsouth.net

■ THE NATIONAL ACROBAT - FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES, IS DEAD, CD

See review above.

Arise Records, P.O. Box 45, Shelbyville, KY 40066

NIBLICK HENBANE - ...AND WE FALL, CD

Slickly packaged history of the band and collection of their early EPs, demos, compilation tracks, etc.. The band's motto: "Fuck You, Get Drunk, Go Die." Drunk punk that overflows the stein. (DAL)

Upstard Productions, 65-A West Madison Ave. #254,

Dumont, NJ 07628

■ NINEDAYSWONDER - THE SCENERY IS IN DISGUISE THERE, CD

See review above.

105-0022, 1-9-14-1202 Kokubu Bldg. Kaigan, Minato-ku, Tokyo, Japan

NO REPLY - S/T, 7"

Top of the line sxe hardcore like hardcore should be. 9 songs crammed onto a 7"! Perfect. (AE)

Mankind Records, PO Box 461, Bellflower, CA 90707

NOT THAT STRAIGHT - LOW PROFILE, CD

This is a European band who sing in English. They play a decent mix of newer-school hardcore and punk, with clearly-sung vocals. The vocals sometimes have a bit of an Oi!/street punk sound. (BJM)

Funtime Records, Dusselhoeck 12, 3220 Holsbeek, Belgium

ONE KING DOWN - GRAVITY WINS AGAIN, CD

New school hardcore. Slow and heavy, with metal guitars, double kick drum, and angry vocals. (BJM)

Equal Vision Records, PO Box 14, Hudson NY 12534

OPEN CLOSE MY EYES - EL NUEVO MILENIO, CD

This band's downfall is that the singer sounds exactly like the singer in By the Grace of God. Musically, they sound like youth-crew hardcore, and they are from Switzerland. El Nuevo Milenio? More like El Nuevo Crappo. Nice try guys. (RE)

Prawda Records, Scholastikastrasse 24, Ch-9400 Rorschach

ORANGE CAKE MIX - PLEXORJET SPRING, 7"

Original and surreal songs with names like "Philemon Arthur & the Dung." What do you think they mean by that? Exudes a classy, spy vs. spy strangeness. (DAL)

The Bedtime PO Box 9142 Chattanooga, Tennessee 37412

ORANGES - THE FIVE DOLLARS EP, CDEP, 7"

Straight-forward rock that calls to mind the Clash and similar mid-tempo rock. (KR)

Morphius Records, P.O. Box 13474, Baltimore, MD 21203.

REVIEWER SPOTLIGHT: Kyle Ryan (KR)

I have a lot of friends who, simply because of their age, have been part of the scene several years more than I have, and they take great pleasure in mocking my limited experience with early-'80s punk. "Yeah, that's great the damn Descendents played in your living room. I was 10 years old." My friend Scott in particular loves to quiz me on whatever old-ass band is pumping through the speakers of his Civic. They are all names I know, but my knowledge is lacking. One of the first bands to change my ignorant ways was D.C.'s Government Issue. Like Husker Du, Government Issue began as a hard-core punk band in the early '80s, but in their later days became much more melodic. The best record that showcases this is 1988's *Crash*. GI stayed closer to its punk roots than the Huskers did, and Crash's fast-paced melodies are the same sounds many punk bands today emulate, whether they know it or not. Crash showcases what made GI so phenomenal: great, melodic punk that still proudly displayed some of the hard-core stylings from which they evolved. "Connecticut" stands out above all the songs on the record with its numerous guitar hooks and catchy chorus. "Summer of Blood," "Forever," "Better Than TV"...you can't go wrong with any of the songs. GI also produced some pretty influential musicians; bassist J. Robbins switched to guitar and founded Jawbox, one of the greatest bands of the '90s. Both he and GI drummer Pete Moffett now play in Burning Airlines, one of the best bands around today. Both of them cut their teeth Government Issue, and the band's legacy is still strong today, a decade after they disbanded.

Stuff I Keep Listening To: Horace Pinker, "Pop Culture Failure," "Copper Regret"; Face to Face, "Reactionary"; Samiam, "Astray"; The Dismemberment Plan.

RABBY FEEBER - DISPOSABLE ZEROS OF ROCK, CD

The difference between good punk bands and pop punk bands is all in the melody. Good punk bands write a good melody and sing it; pop punk bands write a decent melody and then try to make it as poppy as possible, by singing it as dramatically as possible and adding lots of overkill harmonies. Kentucky's Rabby Feeber really walk the line on this record. Ramones-influenced, but thankfully not a Ramones knock-off, they play a mix of snotty, rockin' punk and pop punk. You hear some early Southern California punk influence as well, as in the Descendents. The production is decent: the drums sound good, and the guitars and bass can be heard. The vocals are a bit too high in the mix, though; hence, the pop sound. Some songs are a bit more complex than your standard punk tunes, and it's those little things that might set them apart from other bands. I'd have to say that they ultimately end up on the pop punk side of the fence. If they focus less on the vocals and add a little more rock and roll to the music, they'd have a great formula. (BJM)

REACHING FORWARD - FOR THE CAUSE, CD

They don't break any new ground with the music, but there's enough positive energy here to lift you out of a shitty day. And that's what records are for. Reaching Forward are from the Netherlands, and they play quick scream-a-long hardcore with really optimistic lyrics. They're

"not style-fascists" they're "not excluding anyone" and they "won't shut the fuck up." Furthermore, they're "all so close now, our crew is fucking strong, never a reason to fight, everyone can get along." Who can argue with that? The lyrics are so conversational, and they're delivered in such a straight ahead yell, that you can imagine this is how these guys talk. I picture them walking around with their instruments and when they go to the deli, the band strikes up and Johnny Forward dances and shouts "Give! Me! A sandwich! ... Please!!!!" It also has a great ending, with the chorus chanted over and over until it dissolves into a flurry of curses and swears. A really fun record to get you going in the morning. (DAL)

SAMIAM - ASTRAY, CD

How can you not root for Samiam? These guys have yet to make a bad record despite their major-label debacle and subsequent legal wranglings. I had wondered how the first track of *Astray* would live up to "Full On," the ass-kicking first track of *Astray's* predecessor, *You Are Freaking Me Out*. "Sunshine," *Astray's* opener, performs above and beyond the call of duty, setting the tone for a record that continues to build on Samiam's solid foundation. No one writes with such consistency as Samiam; these are great songs. Samiam's core—Sergie Loobkoff & James Brogan on guitar, Jason Beebout on vocals—writes songs bursting with urgency, musically and lyrically. *Astray* does feature, however, two moody tracks that notice-

OVAL/TILTWHEEL - SPLIT, 7"

Oval is a Japanese band who like At The Drive-in, it's palatable but not good. Tiltwheel has that annoying Fat Wreck drum beat with low feeble early Bob Mould vocals. When SST records suck they put out shit like this!(MY) Snuffy Smile, 4-1-16-201, daita Setagaya-ku Tokyo 155-0033 Japan

PERUKE - PLEASE...MESS WITH TEXAS, CD

Title of track No. 5: "Every Single Vocalist Who Has Ever Been Even Remotely Influenced By James Hetfield, Eddie Vedder or Philip Anselmo Should Fucking Die! Die! Die!" I agree, but this is pretty bad hardcore nevertheless; they call themselves "curmudgeon rock"—I call it weak. (KR) Guts, Apt. 301, 2634 Quadra St., Victoria, BC, Canada, V8T, 4E4.

PHANTOM ROCKERS - PSYCHO SICK MOTHERFUCKER, EP

Despite the fact that one of these guys looks a bit like Michael Bolton, this Texas trio, with former members of Billy Club, play what they call "Psychobilly". I hear rock-a-billy, but I guess the psycho thing goes along with their whole "image" thing. This six song EP includes a cover of "Psycho Therapy" by the Ramones. (ES) Hello 100-E Vine Street, Suite 809, Lexington, KY 40507

PINHEAD GUNPOWDER - LANDLORDS 7"

Another great release from Pinhead Gunpowder that proves that the basic Pop Punk formula ala Green Day can

still sound good in the year 2000. You get horns on the B-side of this one so it is a little different than their other releases. This would have been a highlighted review, but what else can be said about Aaron Cometbus and Billie Joe at this point that hasn't been said. (EA) Lookout Records.

PINHEAD GUNPOWDER / DILLINGER 4 - SPLIT, 7"

This is an all star punk rock extravaganza, one fine five song seven inch featuring to powerhouse of punk that shouldn't be ignored, nuff said. (EA)

Adeline Records 5337 College Ave. #318 Oakland, CA 94618

THEE PIRATES - NASTY BRUTISH AND SHORT, CD

Misfit-like sing-a-long punk with an English feel to it. 17 tracks with two of them are covers, (Clash and Social Distortion) that come off with nice attitude. (BC)

Declaration Box 498 RPO Unv., Saskatoon, SK, Canada S7N-4J8

PN - OUR PITIFUL PARADISE, CD

I would call this "screamo" if the music was more complex. Half of the time the vocals are screamed unintelligibly, and half of the time they are very melodic. The lyrics are as emo as you can get. One song is called "Reflections On My Personal Failure." But the music is straight up new school hardcore, with both fast and slow parts, metal guitar, and double bass drum. (BJM)

Funtime Records, Dutselhoek 12, 3220 Holsbeek, Belgium

POINT / ANYWAY - SPLIT, 7"

See review above.

Silver Rocket Records, Jivenska 1294, 140 00 Praha 4, Czech Republic

POLLINÉ - PARALLEL CANVAS, CDEP

This is an ambitious EP, not just because no song is under 4:30. Polliné seems is attempting to avoid the trappings of generic rock in both structure (long songs) and instrumentation (flutes, organs), but the trick is keeping it interesting, and this isn't consistently so. (KR)

Boxcar Records, P.O. Box 1141, Melbourne, FL 32902-1141.

PRETTY PONY - MICRO.PAILLETES, CD

This is punk lite at best. Songs about amusement parks, a substitute teacher with a 4th grader and looking out for friends in bad relationships. Guy with mostly girl backup vocals. If the women in the band sang lead vocals more, it would be a major improvement. (DM)

Tiger Tuff Records, tigertuff2000@yahoo.com

PROFAX - DISCOGRAPHIE, CD

Profax must have forgotten to wear a condom when they had sex with the music machine because they made twelve musical babies and they all came out annoying and stupid. Half of this sounds like Gorilla Biscuits, the other, like slower 7 Seconds. (RE)

Prawda Records, Scholastikastrassa 24, Ch-9400 Rorschach

REVIEWER SPOTLIGHT: Michael Yurchisin (MY)

Easily one of the finest classic Hardcore Punk/Hardcore bands is the mighty Charged GBH. This stands for either Great/Grievous Bodily Harm. When I was a wee chitlin one of the first punk records I heard was the Leather Bristles Studs and Acne LP(now on CD). This disc made me want to instantly kill my parents and burn down my house with all of my tired Metal shit in it. Hearing this now 15 years after that first exposure still gives me goose pimples, a boner and smiles of evil intent. Please remember the CHARGED portion of the name!!! This is crucial to your enjoyment of this band since the second they dropped the "charged" moniker they started to suck unbelievably. Intros made Charged GBH distinct, each song has a catchy, hum able (well lip/mouth noises actually) introductory portion weather it is a pounding drum beat, throbbing bass line, grating guitar riff or a combination before the rest of the band kicks in to create perfection. Each song on the singles collection CD and first 3 LP's stand alone perfectly there is not a bad one in the batch. Titles to look out for are City Baby Attacked by Rats CD/LP, City Babies Revenge CD/LP, Leather, Bristles, Studs, & Acne LP/CD-Diplomatic Immunity LP/CD & The Clay Years LP/CD are good for greatest hits packages. Collector Scum alert!: Both City Babies CDs were released on 1 CD called the Definite Collection eons ago-Good Luck finding it!

Shit That Rawks Beyond Belief: Milemarker, This Machine Kills-live, Callous Neglect-live, Esperanza-Live & demo, No Justice-Still fighting EP & Live, Life's Halt-Live, Demon System 13-CD, The Stranger Steals-Live, What Happens Next?-Stand Fast Armageddon Justice Fighter CD/CDROM(get the CD for an exceptional long live show/ video) Harkonen/Hellchild live, Everyone who has been cool to the new guy in SF especially the folks at Mission Records!!!!

ably take the tempo down to a more somber level. "Curbside" and "Why Do We" (the last track) may be tough to digest for Samiam's all-out punk fans. For the most part, Samiam pulls it off, but Astray's shining moments come when the band does what it does best: powerful, melodic punk with an emotive feel that never loses its edge. Tracks such as "Dull," "Bird Bath," "Wisconsin" and "Calloused" are some of the album's highlights. Really, though, there's not a bad track on this record. There's a reason why Samiam is still around after everything they experienced in the past few years, and Astray bodes well for a band that was one of punk's shining stars in the '90s—and still is one of the stars of the scene. (KR)

SILENTMAJORITY - YOU WOULD LOVE TO KNOW, CD

From Richard Nixon to Creedence Clearwater Revival (remember the lead-in to the chorus of "Effigy," ... "silent majority, ain't keeping quiet anymore!"), a glorious legacy indeed. This is a short CD, five songs, and it's over pretty quickly. They go through periods of churning, grunting hardcore convention, but they really break out when they speed it up and throw in some impressive guitar work. The first song, "party at richs" is great, as is "amityville horror." The singer does a lot of unusual things with his voice, fiddling around with dynamics and time and even the sound of his voice. The effect is to give the songs an added dose of soul. (DAL)

SILKWORM - LIFESTYLE, CD

If I had not known better, I would have bet the farm on this Silkworm release being a new Pavement record. And while imitation may be the sincerest form of flattery, there is something much more credible about honest inspiration and accidental resemblance. It isn't that Silkworm's Andy Cohen is trying really hard to sound like Pavement's singer (I must be getting old - I can't remember his name!) - it's always painfully obvious when someone is trying too hard - he just has a classic indie rock voice. And even though some are prone to write off bands as "just another [insert band name here] rip-off," the bottom line is not who they borrowed or took inspiration from, but what the music sounds like. In Silkworm's case, comparisons are unavoidable but at the end of the day their songs can stand on their own. (CK)

SOME SOVIET STATION - S/T, CD

It is so obvious that this band would literally kill an audience if allowed to unleash- full on. The only problem is that we simply have not found the technology to adequately handle these guys in a studio. At the root this is really infectious fast indie Punk with an emo edge. The singing is shouted and the music is very unrelated to any band currently out. It is quite unusual and changes often. These guys love to experiment thankfully they never forget to Rawk on these experimental excursions. Great Musicianship! These people have photos of

■ RABBY FEEBER - DISPOSABLE ZEROS OF ROCK, CD

See review above.

Hello 100 E. Vine Street, suite 809, Lexington KY 40507

■ REACHING FORWARD - FOR THE CAUSE, CD

See review above.

Reflections Records, De Nijverheid 30, 7681 MD Vroomshoop, Netherlands

RED ROSES FOR A BLUE LADY - THE RETURN TO MELANCHOLY, CD

Bloody, brutal hardcore that's has the power to make one turn up one's stereo till one's ears bleed. Balls! Amazing vocals carry this one. (AE)

Eulogy Recordings, PO Box 8692, Coral Springs, FL 33075

RED STAR THEORY - NAIMA, 7"

Indie rock cover of John Coltrane's "Naima" along with a solid b-side. The band includes a member of Modest Mouse and a former member of Built to Spill. Talk about credentials. (DAL)

NAIL 1620 SE Hawthorne Blvd., Portland, OR 97214

REDFIELD - BORN TO ROCK, CD

9 songs of melodic punk from Arizona. With a prominent kick drum that Fat Mike would like in the mix. (BC)

Sunset Alliance P.O. Box 31596 Phoenix, AZ. 85046

REPRISAL - BOUNDLESS HUMAN STUPIDITY, CD

Frightening Belgian eco-warriors hard-line about animal

rights. Crunching guitar and guttural screaming devoid of talent. Zip-up windbreakers & brains like Earth Crisis. You get the picture (I hope). (RB)

c.p. 155 47100 Forli ITALY

RICHARD DAVIES - BARBARIANS, CD

Dreamy mundane folk rock with a bit of glam thrown in for good measure. The cover art is very Americana with much thanks going to the U.S.P.S. (BC)

Kindercore Records www.kindercore.com

■ SAMIAM - ASTRAY, CD

See review above.

Hopeless Records, P.O. Box 7495, Van Nuys, CA 91409-7495.

THE SASKATCHEWAN TRIO / THE GAMMA KIDS - SPLIT, 7"

Two sounds from two different bands. The S. Trio plays fast, screaming thrash punk. The Gamma Kids play some very loose punk that's ok. Well, hmmm... it comes on clear vinyl anyhow. (DM)

Eradicor Records, 37 Edgcomb Rd. West Milford, NJ 074804

THE SCAM - DEFEAT COMPETITION, TAPE

Kick ass, a tape! Seven songs of attempted political punk possibly in the vein of Crass or Discharge. Wished I could say that it was totally killer. (AS)

8th Dimension Records, 14312 Spriggs Road, Woodbridge.

VA 22193

SELBY TIGERS - S/T, 7"

Minnesotans attempting to have Brit accents over wimpy light radio punk-cool female vocals on the flip barely mask the blandness. Limited colored vinyl is available if you are a masochist. (MY)

Hopeless, POB 7495, Van Nuys, CA 91409-7495

SEMI-TRUTH - YOU CALL, 7"

Jeremy Gluck's (Barracudas) new band of surf punks puts out a 3 tuner on NDN Records. (BC)

NDN Records P.O. Box 131471, The woodlands, TX. 77393

SHAWN LEE - MONKEY BOY, CD

Interesting to say the least. This is arranged as if Beck started out in the 70's. Has a bit of a cool soul sound to it. Has some scratching and samples mixed over some decent music. (DM)

Amour 2CD, (no address)

■ SILENTMAJORITY - YOU WOULD LOVE TO KNOW, CD

See review above.

Initial Records, PO Box 17131, Louisville, KY 40217

■ SILKWORM - LIFESTYLE, CD

See review above.

Touch and Go, PO Box 25520 Chicago, IL 60625

REVIEWER SPOTLIGHT: MrDana Morse (DM)

One band that I've always enjoyed and has been a major influence on me since I first picked it up was Dag Nasty's "Can I Say". Melodic HC with such great messages that matched those of 7 Seconds. I was always disappointed that Dave Smalley's presence in the band was for such a limited engagement and was only featured on one album. Not that I wasn't a fan of Peter Cortner (Wig Out, Field Day), but he didn't have the same vocal presence as Smalley. When I found out that Smalley was not the original vocalist I was crushed. A friend of mine named "Missy" told me to track down the Dag Nasty CD collection called "85-86". On this collection you get some unreleased versions of songs with Peter, one with Dave and nine tracks with the original vocalist, Shawn Brown. Shawn later fronted the awesome band Swiz, but I was excited to find out he was the original voice of D.N. This collection has the original renditions of some D.N. classic songs and live stuff with Sean. So the question remains, "Who is the better frontman of this amazing positive hardcore band from DC, Sean or Dave?" I won't tell... Find out for yourself. I can't tell you everything just because I'm a reviewer.

What MrDana digs this month includes Tarentel "Looking For Things..." 12", Leatherface "Mush", Repo Man soundtrack and Hallraker.

planes all over their CD because they will be shooting through the sky in no time. Do You like Early Janes Addiction? Do You remember what it was like when you were first exposed to their good stuff? Relive that feeling with Some Soviet Station. (MY)

SONNY VINCENT - RESISTOR, 7"

Long time New York scenester, Sonny Vincent, knocks the dust off his guitar and delivers unto the world a raucous three song platter of guitar overdriven punk rock and roll. With the re-release of a lot of Sonny's seventies punk band's, The Testors, material, he is starting to gain some recognition in the collector nerd contingent of the record buying community. The three tunes here borrow from standard rock and roll signatures, but they are defiant in their adherence to that classic punk rock sound as the guitars are cranked and the enthusiasm and energy are unrelenting. I just find it plain enlightening, especially when so many other veterans are releasing embarrassments, that a guy like Sonny can still blast out the goods. It's just sad that this sound, with his gruff and dirty vocals, will be lost on the post Teengenerate record hoarding public, but then again doesn't everyone secretly wish that their dads were capable of something like this. (AS)

SOUTH 75 - A PICKIN' AND A SINNIN', CD

ANTISEEN fans take heed— there's competition. KY might be JUST south of the Mason-Dixon line, but this is the real deal. Punk don't get more country than this! What a

release!!! Fans of punk that rocks southern style won't want to miss these guys. Sounds like Hellstomper, but with the scales tipped a bit more in favor of rock than country. It's no surprise that their live show features lots of explosions and fire tricks. This is truly a pleasant surprise. While there's no official connection to the Confederacy of Scum indicated on the insert, this band's every C.O.S. fan's dream band. Fast as hell songs about country living and a bad attitude, with cases and cases of beer for good measure. Song titles include "Tennessee Rock Slut," "White Trash Fucker," and "Dirty Deeds." By now you know if this is your cup of tea or not. Country and punk mix well due to both sounds' simplistic tendencies. When South 75 plays a long song, it's still under three minutes. This album's had me shaking my Northern ass all day. Thanx, guys!!! Jump over hurdles to check these sick fuckers out. (AE)

SPARK LIGHTS THE FRICTION - COCAINE HONEYMOON, CD

The name of this band is kind of confusing. It sounds good, but if you think about the words, you're like huh? Shouldn't it be Friction Sparks The Light? I mean, maybe I'm way off by associating their name with a match, but that's just how I think. Maybe I'm just weird. Ever since I went to that party where people were smoking grass, I've felt kind of messed up. Kind of like these guys' name, but enough about that. I heard the singer used to sing for One King Down, but these guys sound nothing like them. So just forget I said anything about that. These guys have that rockin' post hardcore sound. Sometimes it's heavy and rockin' and sometimes it's fast and rockin'. It's generally rockin'. The vocals are melodic and most-

SLOWCOACH - NEW STRATEGIES ARE NECESSARY, THIS IS NOT SOLID GROUND, CD

Indie rock with some attitude and emphasis on "rock". Driving and has somewhat of a darker feel to it. A decent album that's a cross between early Chamberlain and the Afghan Wigs. Slower songs have a real post rock appeal to them also. Solid. (DM)

Silver Girl Records, PO Box 161024 San Diego, CA 92176

SLOWER THAN SEASONS - SOON TO BE EX-GIRLFRIEND, CD

This is some of the most pathetic emo I have ever heard. The only thing worse than the flavor of the month is the flavor of last month. (RB)

Dopamine Records, P.O. Box 3221, Beverly, MA 01915

THE SMURFS - GOT THE BLUES, 7"

Sophomoric pop punk with two subject matters: girls and shows on the WB network. Sarah Michelle Gellar should be everyone's muse. (CK)

2306 Fontaine Ave Charlottesville, VA 22903

SMACKIN' ISAIAH/MORNIQUE/MERRICK - SPLIT CD

3 bands that sound similar to Nofx, Saves the Day and Samiam, respectively. Not exact copycats though. Each band does 6 songs of well-played punk with good harmonies and some tasteful solos thrown in. (NS)

Tank Records P.O. Box 40009, New Bedford, MA 02744

SNATCHER - LAST YELL, FIRST CRY, CD

Mature Japanese pop with English lyrics about loss and crushed expectations. Cheerful and glib. I like it. (AE)

Snuffy Smile, 4-1-16-201 Daita, Setagaya-ku, Tokyo 155-0033, Japan

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS - AKA QUAKERS, 7"

Very screamy, very noisy. Alternating fast and slow, I don't know if it is hardcore, grindcore, screampcore, or what. It's probably a good mix of all of these. Insert descriptive "core" word here, I guess. It is probably "post-" something as well. (BJM)

Trustworthy Records, PO Box 4491, Austin TX 78765

SOME SOVIET STATION - S/T, CD

See review above. (MY)

Moodswing 3833 Roswell suite 104, Atlanta GA, 30342

SONNY VINCENT - RESISTOR, 7"

See review above.

NDN Records, P.O. Box 131471, The Woodlands, TX 77393-1471, USA

SOUL-JUNK - 1956, CD

Mostly smooth, grooving hip hop, with elements of folk and garage thrown in, as well as any other number of styles. The rap vocals remind me of de la Soul. There are samples and synthesizers as well as a good amount of live instruments. The vocals are trance-like, and the lyrics are often about god and heaven. A couple of songs sound like Beck,

and the mix of styles gives the whole project a feel similar to some of the different things Beck has done. (BJM)

5 Minute Walk Records, 2056 Commerce Avenue, Concord CA 94520

SOUTH 75 - A PICKIN' AND A SINNIN', CD

See review above.

Hello Records, 100 E. Vine St. Suite 809, Lexington, KY 40507

SPARK LIGHTS THE FRICTION - COCAINE HONEYMOON, CD

See review above.

Hex Records 201 Maple Ln., N. Syracuse, NY 13212

SRI - UNION SQUARE, CD

Top 40-ish sentimental pop tunes with quirks like a Dutch accent, quotes from Epictetus and E.M. Forster on the lyric sheet, and a hippie fascination with Eastern religion. (DAL)

Reflections Records, De Nijverheid 30, 7681 MD Vroomshoop, Netherlands

THE STATIC - STAB AT THE NIGHT, 7"

Four song 45 that tears it up with rough rock mojo. You have to appreciate the cover photo of the band bloody and dead in what looks like a gutted bathroom. (DAL)

Rocknroll Blitzkrieg!, P.O. Box 11906, Berkeley, CA 94712

REVIEWER SPOTLIGHT: Neal Shah (NS)

Now I really don't like most power violence or grind stuff, but an album that I do like which probably inspired most of these bands is S.O.D.'s "Speak English Or Die." I remember being in 8th grade and driving to some carnival with my parents and my friend Mark. I had a Minor Threat tape in the car stereo and my parents told me to take it out because of all of the swears. So then Mark put in S.O.D. and we just laughed when What's That Noise came on. My mom just shook her head. But S.O.D. weren't just good at pissing people off. They were good. The songs were manic paced, but melodic and memorable. Billy Milano actually had a good voice, and a good sense of humor. And the moshes! Whoa, Nelly! No metal or hardcore band can even contend with the mosh parts laid down long ago on that album. These guys were the perfect middle ground between punk and metal. Punk music at the time was musically a little boring and metal was a little noodley and too serious. S.O.D. was a band that all my friends agreed on. I recently got to see S.O.D. on their reunion tour and the best part of the show was when some guy ran onstage, shook Billy's hand and Billy spit a mouthful of water right in the guy's face.

I'm also listening to: new Intensity CD, the Goats "Tricks of the Shade," Violence, Rick Springfield and "The Bone" classic rock station.

ly sung, but sometimes there's some yelling going on. There aren't too many bands playing this type of stuff nowadays. It's a nice change of pace to the more defined hardcore styles. Okay, and now for my grand comparison. Imagine Quicksand, Farside, Serpico and Jawbox all having an orgy. Well, actually don't, because there would just be a lot of sword fighting, and the girl from Jawbox would be running for the door. (NS)

STEREOTYPERIDER - FAIR WEATHER FAN, CD

When I first saw this CD, I thought the band's name was Stereotypewriter. That would be a horrible fucking name. And you know what? There are probably some assholes out there with that as their band name. I can picture them, sitting around one day, playing hack, trying to think of a name for their crappy hippy funk band. They'd have it narrowed down to that, Rastafoureyes and Intergalactic Groove Theory Junction. I know they're out there! But anyway, these guys are really good. I'd never heard them before and they knocked me on my ass! Okay, not really, but my ass is sore for some reason. I'd say that these guys have a foundation of pop punk, but maybe that's just because they write good melodies and the singer reminds me of Frank from Big Drill Car a little bit. Other than that, these guys play really interesting stuff with elements of punk, hardcore and emo, but without the limitations of those styles. The music is upbeat and driving for the most part. The vocals are melodic and sometimes yelled. The lyrics are pretty cool too. You won't feel dumb singing along. And the first song definitely deserves to be on everyone's mix tapes. Or mix CDs. (NS)

SUPERHOPPER - MUSIC FOR DOWNTOWNS, CD

I'll get my reservations out on the table right away: the lyrics are bad. The singer's voice is weird. The back of the lyric booklet has a message to their friends that says "We have been Superhopper for three years now, and we still find that everyday is a new and exciting experience..." and then goes on for awhile and then has all of the bands' signatures. But look, maybe I'm just not used to such earnestness in this cynical and ironic age. More power to them. Their songs are fun to listen to. The record blasts off with a burner about A.A., and listening to the rest of the album is like riding a rock rollercoaster at a county fair sipping a cheap beer and getting sunburned and not paying anyone any attention in your sunglasses. You know, that kind of record. They make a good use of a keyboard and a trombone, two additions to a rock and roll band that could become obnoxious in the wrong hands, so they have to get credit for that. (DAL)

THE THUMBS - ALL LESSER DEVILS, CD

The Thumbs somehow manage to do what most bands fail miserably at this day in age, and that is to write songs where the words of the chorus never seem to repeat themselves but the song nonetheless maintains some kind of weird catchiness. Their lyrics seem to slur by at frantic pace demanding the need for two vocalists just to get all of the words to fit over top of the music, which is of a slam bang cross between Dillinger Four and, oh let's say, Rancid. The concepts tackled in their lyrics are of a political bend with the ideas getting somewhat bogged down in the abundance of text. I just wish that bands like this

THE STEREO - NEW TOKYO IS CALLING, CDEP

Standard, radio friendly alternative rock by this Ex-Animal Chin band. "New Tokyo is Calling" sounds exactly like a recycled Animal chin song. Their lack of originality appalls me. (RE)

Fueled By Ramen, PO Box 12563, Gainesville, FL 32604

STEREOTYPERIDER - FAIR WEATHER FAN, CD
See review above.

Sunset Alliance P.O. Box 31596, Phoenix, AZ 85046

THE STORY SO FAR - WHEN FORTUNE SMILED, CDEP

Chicago-style melodic punk featuring the singer of 88 Fingers Louie. Good stuff-I have a feeling I'd like it even more if the production were better. (KR)

Hopeless P.O. Box 7495, Van Nuys, CA 91409-7495.

SUPER SPORT 396 - FIRST THIRTEEN, CD

Something tells me this is the bands first 13 songs they wrote together at one of their mom's basement. Messy punk from the nation of Texas. (BC)

Hi Roller Records 2317 A Moser, Dallas, TX. 75206

SUPERHOPPER - MUSIC FOR DOWNTOWNS, CD
See review above.

Moniker? No! Records, no address given

THE SUSPEKT - ARTICLES, DESIGNERS AND CHEMISTS, CD

It will depress you; so I warned you, and you don't have to suffer the same fate I did. But if you're already down, you might as well. But rest assured, it won't pick you up, it will tie the noose & hand you the razor. (RB)

Siladi Records

THE TABASCOS - S/T, CD

This is the Netherlands answer to bands that are going for the never ending legacy of Ramones / Queers sound. Three different vocalists lead the attack on girls, beer and other girls. Decent sound and good harmonies makes this enjoyable. (DM)

Ignition Records c/o Sonic Rendezvous DCM, PO Box 417
1800 AK Alkmaar The Netherlands

TECHNICIAN - "ELECTRONIC CONVERSATIONS WITH THE DEAD", CD

This is a good CD. The uneven mixing comes off well and the band plays with almost Shellac/Jesus Lizard precision at times. Rough around the edges, but of course that's how they should be. Complaint: too quiet. (RB)

Tranquility Base Records, PO Box 184, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010

THREE YEARS DOWN - CREEPY BABY, CD

Mid paced punk/rock and roll. Good guitar parts and catchy tunes. If I liked this type of stuff, I'd like these guys. (NS)

11345 Records P.O. Box 4948, Berkeley, CA 94704

THRICE - IDENTITY CRISIS, CD

A mix of Cali-style skate punk and screaming hardcore, with just a bit of a metal edge thrown in. There are a few parts with great vocal harmonies (when they're not screaming), which I'd like to hear more often. (BJM)

Greenflag Records, PO Box 41031, Long Beach CA 90853

THUJA - THE DEER LAY DOWN THEIR BONES, CD

Some musicians must send their CD to every possible music magazine. This ain't punk. It's very modern classical with lots of piano. (AE)

Thuja, PO Box 642371, San Francisco, CA 94164-2371

THE THUMBS - ALL LESSER DEVILS, CD

See review above.

Adeline, 5337 College Ave. #318, Oakland, CA 94618

THE THUMBS/JACK PALANCE BAND - SPLIT, 7"

Your standard sort of New Bomb Turkseque straight-ahead rock. Not bad but not terribly engaging, either. (KR)

ADD P.O. Box 8240, Tampa, FL 33674.

TJO - S/T, 7"

Three songs written and played entirely by Tara Jane O'Neil. Lovely voice, lovely instrumentation. Your girlfriend will think that this is really pretty. (CK)

Troublemakers Unlimited, 16 Willow Street Bayonne, NJ 07002

REVIEWER SPOTLIGHT: Russell Etchen (RE)

For people content with owning only "Somery" the pitiful collection of hits by the Descendents, number one, there's something wrong with punk "greatest hits" and two, what the hell is wrong with you? You cannot take any of these songs out of their original context. One of the most over-looked records in this band's impressive album library, Enjoy came out after their second record, I Don't Want to Grow Up. Enjoy is more experimental than the rest of the Descendents records. Sure the classics are here, "Wendy" (a Beach Boys cover!), "Sour Grapes" arguably the best Descendents song, and "Get the Time". But back to back, are two of their weirdest songs, "Hurtin' Crue" their attempt at metal (which is great but still fails because this band is too good at making pop songs) and "Kids on Coffee" a wired, hyper, fast punk song which makes you feel like you are up, at 4am high on caffeine. Side one ends with several minutes of the band farting and recording it. Sometimes I do that too. My inspiration lies in this record. On side two of this record, the Descendents debuted the slower, pre-grunge sound, like on "Days are Blood" and "Green", that they would continue to explore further in, ALL, the final record before Milo left for a nine year work break (to become a bio-chemist, of all things!). In these songs, Milo seems to be venting more, at the world, at everything fucked up and wrong. On ALL, the songs about girls and farting are there as well, but even on that record, there's a somber tone that shows up. Any fan of the Descendents, or punk rock in general, is missing out if you don't own Enjoy, and every other LP by this amazing band.

would shy away from the standard recording production techniques that seem to give so many releases today a weird feeling of sameness. Also so many songs, these included, lack that riff or melody that causes one upon hearing it to pick up a guitar and try to play along, but the seven songs on this CD blaze/blur along quickly ending with a Smiths cover that is neither funny or endearing. (AS)

THE WEAKERTHANS - LEFT AND LEAVING, CD

There was something about Propagandhi I could never resolve: the two very different writing styles of Chris and John. John's pop songs always seemed at odds with Chris' politically charged anthems of anarchy. A friend of mind saw a symbiotic relationship in that—John balanced out Chris' metal tendencies, and Chris kept John from getting too poppy and emo. But now John is on his own with the Weakerthans, and listeners got their first taste of life without Chris with the release of Fallow, the band's first CD. Left and Leaving, the follow-up record, is my first real introduction to the Weakerthans. The first track, "Everything Must Go!" had me worried. It's a extremely slow, moody and musically minimalistic song. Uh oh, I thought. But then "Aside," the second track started, and my worries vanished. At its peak, Left and Leaving produces some of the best power pop I have heard in a while. The record does slow down in a few places ("Pamphleteer," "History to the Defeated") and pick up the moodiness of "Everything Must Go!" My interest waned a bit, but some interesting instrumentation (whirly-wind,

slide guitar) helped keep me listening. Still, the Weakerthans do their best work when they get energetic, and these moments are the highlights of the record. See "Left and Leaving," "Watermark," "This is a Fire Door Never Leave Open" for more information. Good stuff. (KR)

V/A - RUNNIN' ON FUMES, CD

Gearhead magazine is a staple with the breed of garage/hot rodders like myself, it's a great mag. One of the best parts was getting a cool 7" in every issue with exclusive songs, normally fitting a theme of the issue. Not only should you already own all the issues you can now buy this disc to listen to those songs in your car, at work or at your computer with the shiny silver disc. This is a compilation of those songs with great bands such as: Gas Huffer, Supercharger, Clawhammer, Red Aunts, the Fastbacks, the Meices, Girl Trouble, Monomen, Chrome, Man or Astro-Man?, Southern Culture on the Skids, the Untamed Youth, the Groovie Ghoulies, the Donnass, Cosmic Psychos, the Melvins, Mudhoney, Davie Allan and the Arrows, Rocket from the Crypt, and the Hellacopters. I just realized I own records by every band (not including the Gearhead singles) on this list, so it is easy to see why I loved this compilation. The Fastbacks songs are worth the price alone. Other highlights include two Rezillos covers (Gas Huffer and Supercharger) and Sweet covers (Groovie Ghoulies and the Donnass). Enjoy this great disc, especially if you don't own the singles. (EA)

THE TRANS MEGETTI - SOON TO BE SEEING YOU LATER, CD

Poorly pixilated pictures of your band live on the cover of your EP does not make for a good cover. It does allow for some good alliteration in my review though. Trans Megetti play decent post-punk, borderline rock that teeters on not being good. The singers high pitched voice reminds me of the singer in At the Drive In. (RE)

Art Monk PO Box 6332, Falls Church, VA 22040

TRANSAM - RED LINE, CD

Quite original Lo-fi experimental space music that is catchy. I have heard very little music like TransAm. Warning: it is mellow throughout. (MY)

Thrill Jockey, POB 08038, Chicago IL, 60608

TRUE TO LIFE - THOUGHTS TO REARRANGE, CD

European hardcore along the lines of Strife and Victory-style bands. Some songs are in German (I think), but e-mutes and screaming vocals are apparently staples of every nation's hardcore culture. (KR)

Xinfinitex Records, Postfach 1714, CH-800026 Zurich.

TUPAMAROS - OUR MODERN PAST, CD

More melodic emocore for the new young ones of today. Well executed with a slight melancholy feel. (AS)

Stickfigure, P.O. Box 55462, Atlanta, GA 30308

TURNING POINT - 1988-1991, CD

Strange to see Jade Tree putting out an old school hardcore punk discography like this, but the inside cover says it all. Turning Point was one of the most original hardcore bands back in the day and, after putting out several records on various labels, came back to Jade Tree to put this thirty-eight track CD out. (ES)

Jade Tree, 2310 Kennwynn Rd., Wilmington, DE 19810

THE UNIFORM - THIRTY THREE REVOLUTIONS AND OTHER MINOR SKIRMISHES, CD

A collection of songs from three past recordings, a smattering of new songs and one live track. (CK)

Morphius PO Box 13474 Baltimore, MD 21203-3474

THE USELESS FUCKS - ANOTHER DAY AT THE OFFICE, 7"

Speedy punk full of lamentations about the working world. Contains the now-classic line, "I'm up to my ankles in fucking Hepatitis-B!" (CK)

Useless Fucks, PO Box 417 Greenland, NH 03840

VIOLENTLY ILL - ONE-SIDED EP, 7"

Raging punk recorded in the red. Rudimentary and angry. Those things are good, but the 3rd grade quality of the lyrics (and somewhat the fact that they wasted one side of a record) are not. Four bits of noise clocking in at a grand total of 2 minutes 12 seconds. (RB)

Knot Music, P.O. Box 501, South Haven, MI 49090-0501

VOLTA DO MAR - S/T, CD

These guys play 3 songs of intricate, indie sounding instrumental music. Sounds a little like Bozart. Good background music. (NS)

1803 W. North Ave. #2, Chicago, IL 60622

THE VON ZIPPERS/LES SECRÉTAIRES VOLANTES - SPLIT, 7"

These 2 bands play raw garage punk. Les Secrétaires Volantes are a little faster and the Von Zippers are a little more raw. (NS)

Mag Wheel P.O. Box 115, Stn. R, Montreal QC H2S 3K6

THE WEAKERTHANS - LEFT AND LEAVING, CD

See review above.

Sub City, POB 7495, Van Nuys CA, 91409-7485

THE WEAKLINGS - NO ONE CAN STOP YOU, 7"

Super rocked-out vocals backed by music that's in a New Bomb Turks sort of vein. Nothing terribly interesting. (KR)

Junk Records, 7071 Warner Ave., E-736, Huntington Beach, CA 92647-5495.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES - S/T, CD

10 tunes of Instrumental music with the low guitar sound and bass driving along the sound. Forceful stuff from some Canadians. (BC)

Matlock Records 1858 Boulevard Auclair, Sainte-Foy, QC, Canada G2G-1R7

REVIEWER SPOTLIGHT: Ryan Batkie (RB)

In this time of what I see as complacency and boredom in the punk world, we would all do ourselves a favor by getting familiar with the Yah Mos once again. When what gets all the lip service is ineffectual and lame, what thrills me is the prospect of kids (of all ages) thrashing in their garage and banging out adrenaline-soaked songs of their own with a healthy Yah Mos inspiration under their belts. I think that if you're not blown away by "Off Your Parents" within the first 12 seconds, you just don't get it. The first 7" "Right On" was rad enough, but "Off Your Parents" just blows almost everything else made last decade out of the water. They played with a supreme intensity that can't be learned. They played that way because they had to. They had no choice. They had to release something. The Yah Mos had an uncanny knack for flowing between different tempos and rhythms with an ease that made spastic songs that would otherwise be all over the place fit into a perfect little piece of inventive punk rock energy. They were feeling it, that's what it was. You should feel it too, if you haven't yet. Right now some of them are feeling it in !!!

These be gettin' play: Dillinger Four "Versus God" (still), Bitchin, Jets to Brazil "Four Cornered Night" (sides 1 & 4 especially), the new From Ashes Rise LP, new Weakerthans, prepare yourself for the new Small Brown Bike LP

WESTON - YOU KISS LIKE AN ANGEL, 7"

Is this a joke? Is this the same Weston? 2 light indie sounding songs with whispered vocals. This sounds like slow Pixies stuff. Maybe it's okay for a new band, but is this the same Weston? (NS)

Mojo Records, www.mojorecords.com

WORM QUARTET - SUMOPHOBIA, CD

This guy is obviously a big fan of Weird Al and Atom and his Package, because this 18 song CD is filled with tracks clearly influenced by both of those artists. His self-described "electronic comedy punk" is a combination of juvenile humor and bizarre keyboard noise. (ES)

MP3.com, 4790 Eastgate Mall, San Diego, CA 92121

THE WRETCHED, THE - LIVE, 7"

If you look at the picture disc, it looks like a 4-band Angelic Upstarts tribute; but it comes in a sleeve that makes it out to be a Wretched Ones record only. And that's what's on it, these wretched ones doing pathetic drinking anthems...live. (RB)

Knock-out Records, Postfach 100716, 46527 Dinslaken, Germany

YEAST - HISTORY EQUALS FOG, CD

A confusing and frustrating record, but certainly an interesting one. It drifts between several styles, from chunky metal to droning jams with some complex tunes in between. (DAL)

Household Name Records, PO Box 12286, London, SW9 6FE, UK

(YOUNG) PIONEERS/DRUNK - FIGURITAS, SPLIT 7"

This is part of a limited edition series of splits on What Else? Records. Each band covers the other on this two song split. YP, ex-Born Against members, plays intense punk/hc with distorted vocals and a slight twinge of folk. Drunk are more mellow, similar to Nick Cave or Leonard Cohen. (ES)

What Else? Records, P.O. Box 1211, Columbus, IN 47202

ZEEK SHECK - ZEMAG DAH, CD

Artsy noise with lots of electronic effects, screams, voice effects, and other kookiness. (AE)

Toyo PO Box 421, 564 Mission St., San Francisco, CA 94105

V/A - CHEAP PUNK COMP, CD

I feel bad writing this but I have heard this a million times done a million times better. Most of these bands are generic east bay/Lookout early 1990s clones. Regrettably there are no standouts. (MY)

\$5 Escape Pod Records, POB 1462, Grapevine TX, 76099

V/A - CLASS PRIDE WORLD WIDE, CD

A compilation of 19 Oi! bands mostly from North America and Europe. Songs all have an anti-Fascist message. (BJM)

Insurgence Records, 2 Bloor Street West, suite 100-184, Toronto ON M4W 3E2, Canada

V/A - EQUAL VISION RECORDS SAMPLER, CD

A pretty diverse roster of hardcore music is showcased on this label's sampler. I'm sure most people have heard Saves The Day, Bane and Converge by now, but if you're interested in Equal Vision's back catalog, then this is the CD for you. (NS)

Equal Vision P.O. Box 14, Hudson, NY 12534

V/A - ERASE YER HEAD, 7"

This edition #9 from Erase Yer Head Split single Club features God Is My Co-Pilot and Melt Banana doing their things. (BC)

Pandemonium Records B.P. 64, 13192 Marseille Cedex 20, France

V/A - JADE TREE FIRST FIVE YEARS, CD

This double CD is a retrospect of the first five years of Jade Tree records (minus the Swiz material). Owing most of these singles I can say that Jade Tree is one eclectic label that you should know. If you don't already own these singles then pick this one up: Gravel, Jones Very, Railhead, Pitchblende, Eggs, Leslie, UOA, Walleye, Dmnnation and Edsel.

Jade Tree 2310 Kennwynn Rd. Wilmington, DE 19810

V/A - JUST ANOTHER TASTE OF ELECTRONIC WATUSI BOOGALOO, CD

This is a jazzy, meandering, up beat electronic compilation by bands like, Mains Ignition, Babalu, Oh Polo, and Biowire. What this is doing being reviewed in a punk rock magazine, is beyond me. I understand the meaning of keeping an open mind, but this is stretching it. (RE)

Kindercore, www.kindercore.com

V/A - LIVE AT THE BLUE ROOM, CD

Braid, Burning Airlines, Most Secret Method and the like. Sounds exceptionally good for live recordings, but they are. Overall a worthwhile release dedicated to what seems to be a nice venue. (RB)

Yanstar

V/A - MIGHT AS WELL...CAN'T DANCE, CD

An Adeline Records compilation featuring Pinhead Gunpowder, Dillinger Four, Samiam and some other lesser-known bands. (CK)

Adeline Records, 5337 College Ave #318 Oakland, CA 94618

V/A - NO-FI TRASH: A FLOPPY COW RECORDS COMPILATION, CD

Twenty-eight tracks of offerings from bands like The Promise Ring, Lagwagon, Sarge, the Get Up Kids, Hot Water Music and A New Found Glory. Good stuff overall, ranging from mid-tempo Get Up Kisodesque rock to Screaming Weasel type pop punk. (KR)

Floppy Cow Records, P.O. Box 79, 3054 Schuepfen, Switzerland.

V/A - ROCK N ROLL AU GO-GO, CD

4 bands each play 2 songs of the type of punk rock and roll that you'd expect to see in the local bar somewhere. The bands are Rocket City Riot, Three Years Down, the Candy Snatchers and Pizzle, the first 2 being the best. (NS)

Devil Doll Records P.O. Box 30727, Long Beach, CA 90853

■ V/A - RUNNIN' ON FUMES, CD

See review above.

Gearhead Records PO Box 421219 San Francisco, CA 94142-1219

V/A - SET SAIL FOR MIDNIGHT: A COMPILATION FOR BOYS AND GIRLS, CD

A compilation of 16 bands who mostly play in either the indie rock style or that have that mid-80s-Dischord sound, or some combination of both. There, I didn't say "emo." Most have warm, fuzzy guitars, and sound similar to one another in one way or another. There is one noisy rock band and one pop group thrown in for good measure. Bands include the Sheila Divine, Sunshine, and Her Flyaway Manner. (BJM)

Seismic Records, 86 Carlton Road, Boston Lincolnshire PE21 8PQ

V/A - TRANSMISSION ONE: TEA AT THE PALAZ OF HOON, CD

Once you get through the boring spoken intro and "world music" crap, there's actually some music on this mother of a double CD compilation. Some of it good, too! Released as a testament to a former venue. Very artsy. (RB)

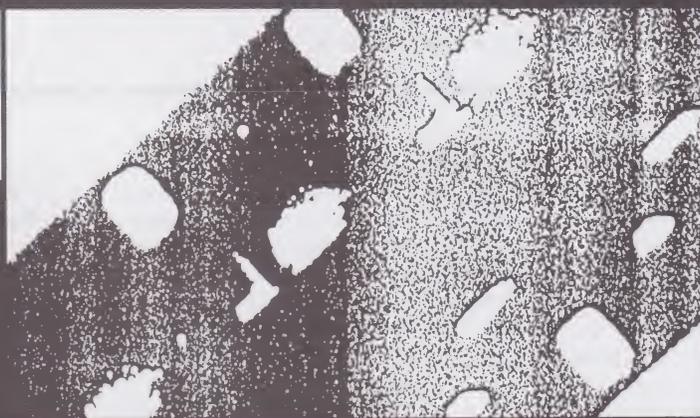
Cosmodemonic Telegraph, No. 46 State St., New London, CT 06320

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PUNK PLANET REVIEWS
PO BOX 6014 EAST LANSING MI, 48826

PLASTIC

FILM



You should have read my first introduction to this column. Actually, no, you shouldn't have. It was a piece of shit. Writing about the process and difficulties of writing is a tricky thing, and, more often than not, it comes off as whiny and self-serving. It's easy to get caught up in the thrill and the pressure of a first column, though, especially when it's something you've been dreaming about doing for quite a while.

Three and a half years ago, I finished a short film called *Kansas Anymore*. It was the fictional story of a band at the end of their road. Their tour is over and they drive home across the Midwest, disintegrating as they go. It's a coming out story and a breaking up story and sort of a love poem to the Midwest and punk rock. It's also not the world's greatest film, but it was my first one and I was pretty happy with it at the time. I showed it at school, and it was pretty well received. Likewise in my hometown. I submitted it to a few festivals, but with only middling luck.

Not being entirely sure how to get it seen by the people who I felt would be most interested in it, I sent *Kansas Anymore* to the punk rock holy trinity (*MRR*, *HeartattaCk*, *Punk Planet*) for review. All three declined, for various reasons. This was right after the whole brouhaha with *MRR* and *Rain Like the Sound of Trains* and a new review policy that seemed to dictate a particular view of punk rock. None of the three, though, seemed to know what to do with a DIY film being presented for review.

Once I'd worked through the rejection (years of therapy), I was able to stand

back and take stock of the punk/hardcore community and how DIY film and video could be a part of it. I saw a network that had developed to support a ton of bands through shows and labels and distros. And I saw a zine network that spanned the globe and linked intellectual misfits of all stripes. But what was missing was any sense of a community among DIY moviemakers.

So I've spent most of the last three years trying to learn what is out there in terms of a DIY movie scene. A lot of what I've discovered has involved being able to find common ground with other marginalized communities around issues of equipment access and screening space. The search has also involved looking backwards and piecing together a history of punk moviemaking that goes beyond *Suburbia* and *Another State of Mind* (though both are great flicks).

That said, what does it all mean for the future of this column?

When I found out that I was going to be doing this column, I wrote my friend Beto, who's pretty knowledgeable about a lot of things, but especially writing for zines. I asked him what he'd write about. His response was this:

"Probably (at least I hope) you'll use the column as a kind of "Dateline: Frontline" on what happens when people take punk ethics and aesthetics and try to put them to work. You'll have to talk about how the film medium is akin to media more conventionally associated with punk, and how it's different. You'll have to talk about the link between grassroots (?) filmmaking and major studio productions (to wit, how do developments in the former

affect the latter, and vice versa). You'll have to talk about the problems punk filmmakers face, from funding to compromises in the production process to lack of venues for showing their work. I think you can do this in a lot of ways. Discussing a particular film, reporting on some conversations at a festival, doing an interview with a director—these can all be springboards for the exploration of much larger issues. To be honest, this sounds like a hell of a job, so I'm glad you're doing it and not me."

Yeah, exactly.

At least half of each column will be devoted to filmmakers who are making work from within or of interest to, the punk community. I'm not particularly interested in rehashing the "what is punk" debate here, though. Decide for yourself and feel free to let me know if my interpretation is anything like yours. Most relevant these days, I think, is punk's status as an economic stance and a possible escape from the traditions of capitalist culture. Film is expensive and making movies is a lot more complex than playing in a band. You can't ignore money when you're making a movie and it's all but impossible to do it alone, but that doesn't give you an excuse to push aside the DIY ethos whenever it's convenient. Part of the value, then, in talking with DIY moviemakers is getting to hear how others have worked and scammed to find ways to get their movies made and shown. I'm also committed to stepping outside of punk to highlight moviemakers who, though they might not self-identify as "punk," are making activist or queer or experimental work in a DIY fashion.

The rest of the space I have will be for reviews. I'm counting on you all to reveal whole new worlds of diy movies to me so that I, in turn, can share them with everyone. It'll be like one big goeey sharing party. Eventually, I'm hoping that I'll get so many submissions that it'll force the *Punk Planet* powers that be to give movies their own reviews section, as well as a column. But that's up to you. Here are my ground rules for movie reviews:

1. I will review everything I get as long as it is not funded by a studio or major label. As submissions increase, a backlog may build up, but I will get around to all the work eventually.
2. Please don't sent tapes of live bands unless there is more to it than just live footage. Exceptions include shows that took place before 1980 and the Nation of Ulysses.
3. I will give bad reviews. Making movies is hard, and making good movies is even harder. There are almost as many crappy films out there as there are crappy bands. But I'm glad they're being made and the least they deserve is a review.
4. DIY movie culture has nowhere near the distribution of music or zines, so if you're going to go to the trouble of sending a tape to be reviewed, please have said tape available for sale or trade and include the price of the tape and the address with your submission.
5. Don't forget to put your tapes in bubble wrap envelopes (I dumpster mine from the University library here). Fiber fill is really bad for VCRs.

That pretty much covers it. I know I've skimmed over a lot of stuff, but I promise that they're all topics that I'll tackle more fully in future columns. So that's a really long intro, right? Like I said, you should have read the first one... Anyway, let's take a look at someone that's doing something really cool right now, OK?

Traveling Cinema

Part of my exploration of the world of punk movies has involved tracking down people who have taken their movies on tour. Now, I'm not talking about some lame, Dockers-funded college campus tour, but genuine DIY touring, just like all those bands we all love. At this point, I know that it's still a pretty rare thing, but I also know that more and more people are doing it, and that's great. Any kind of performance that helps to break up the monotony of a show and stretch the boundaries of our "scene" is all right in my book.

Thus, when I had the chance to help bring to Columbia, MO (my hometown, which I'll probably be talking a lot about in this column) an act called the Traveling Cinema (a Mystifying Oracle of Sight and Sound), I was thrilled. The Traveling Cinema is a self-contained movie theater that can be broken down and transported to almost anywhere. It's a room, 10' x 10' x 8', that contains three theater seats, a carpet, and an ingenious rear projection 16mm film screen. Its creator, builder and operator, Johnne Eschleman, sits (crouches, really) in a hidden projection booth and runs the movie while simultaneously creating a soundtrack made up of guitar, keyboard and occasionally scratchy old records. His films are found footage, though much of it has been manipulated through scratching on the film or even introducing foreign objects (like flies) into the film itself. Additionally the cinema has very small windows all around, so that a multiplicity of viewing options are created.

Johnne will bring the traveling cinema pretty much anywhere, from what I call tell. One of his only stipulations is that there be no charge for admission. To cover his costs (which are pretty much those of a touring band) he sells T-shirts and hand-decorated CD's (when he came to

Columbia, he'd only made one since they were so labor-intensive to create). He also accepts payment from hosts that can afford it (we made him dinner and gave him a couch to crash on and he seemed pretty content).

People who came to see the cinema were awed. A lot of them talked about it being eerie, and the music and lighting (a single red bulb) did give it a creepy feeling, but I think that my favorite thing about it was the way it blended an archaic and somewhat anachronistic shell with forward-thinking art. In the earliest days of cinema, people traveled the country, exhibiting short films at dime museums, carnival midways, and pretty much any place they could set up. There's an intimate feeling to the traveling cinema that perfectly matches to films, many of which are made up of old home movies. Musically, Johnne outdoes all the post-rock poseurs who are constantly referencing their music as being like a film soundtrack by actually creating a resonant, ambient soundtrack for his film that changes with each screening.

To find out more about the traveling cinema and the Distance Formula, check out their website at www.travellingcinema.web.com or send a letter to 305 SE 3rd Ave. #401 Portland OR, 97214-1007

•••

p.s. If anyone knows anything about a film called *Sniffing Glue*, directed by Brian Dead and set in Washington DC, please contact me.

p.p.s. I'm bringing my new movie, *Magic City*, to the West Coast in November and December. If you're interested in having me and my tourmate Andy Cigarettes come perform in your town, drop me a line.

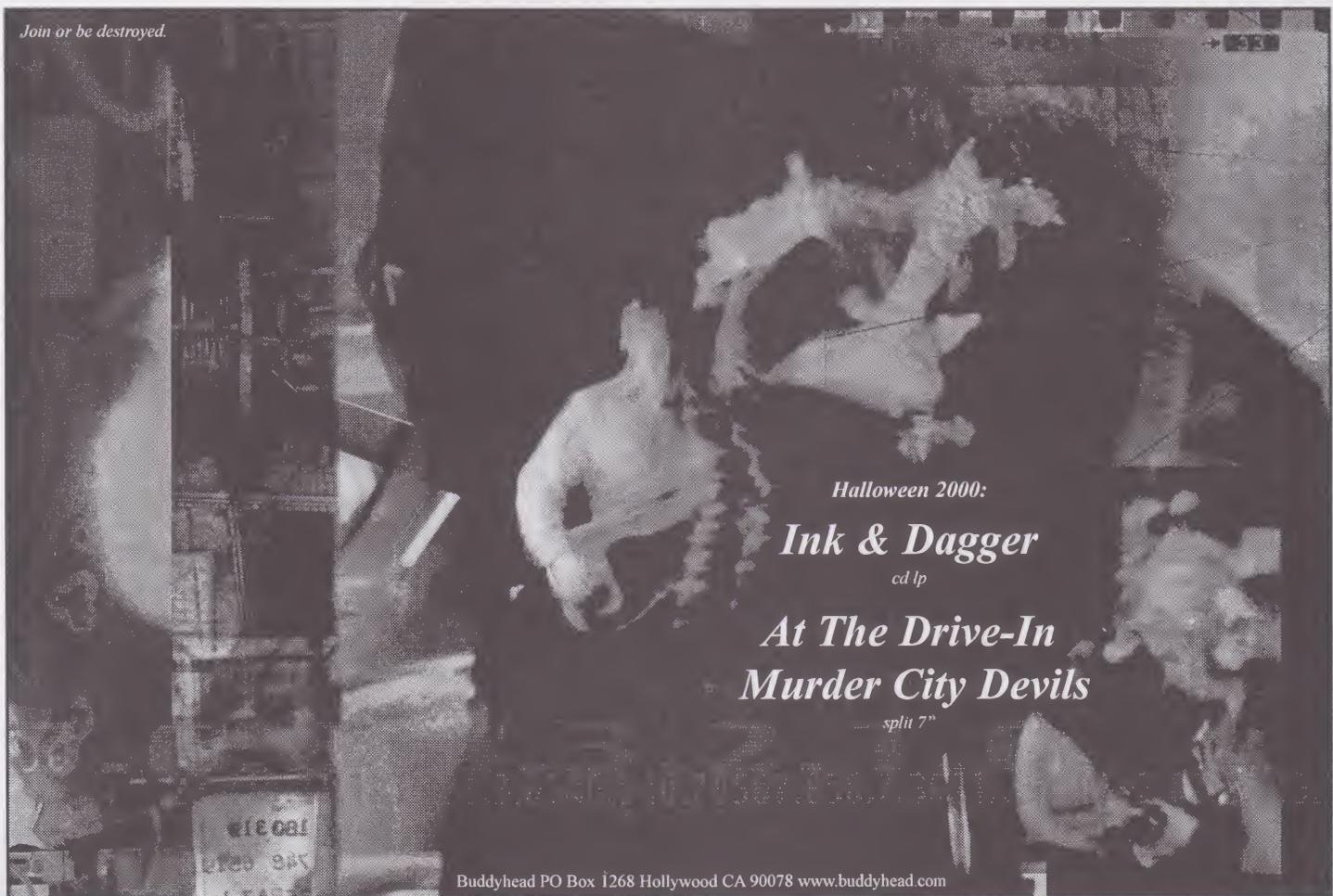
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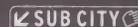
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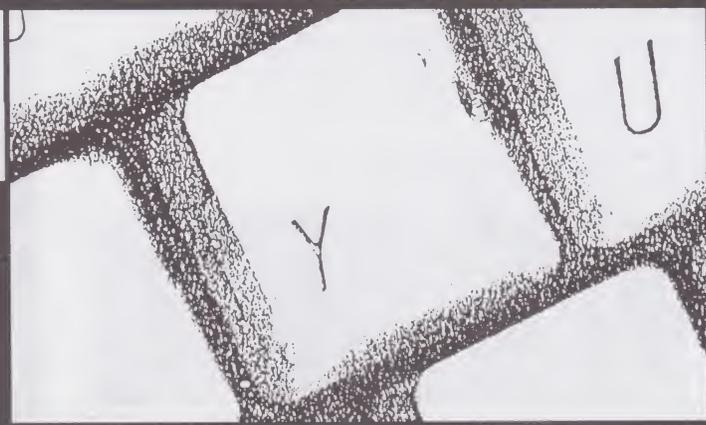
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PAPER

ZINES



59¢ #26 This is a funny little metal fanzine from the great northwest. It's good-humored and rather entertaining, for those who enjoy metal or just pretend to because it's hip alike. The writing is solid, quality stuff and they know what they're talking about. The metal world is a better place with this magazine around. (RB)
\$2 ppd., P.O. Box 19806, Seattle, WA 98109

\$6.99/LB #3 Nicely laid out full size zine with music/zine reviews a la Punk Planet. Interviews with Lou Barlow, Mike Patton, Cobra Killer, Sweep the Leg Johnny, Pavement, and others. (ES)
\$3 to P.O. Box 43481, Somerville, MA 02143

Alarm #6 Fairly sizeable indie music mag with the usual stuff. Good layout, quality printing and pretty good writing make this worth checking out if you notice a band you want to know about in the table of contents. (This issue has interviews with Judas Factor, Grey Area, Onlinedrawing, Low Power FM.) The reviews are weak, but the fiction is interesting and makes up for it. Who needs a good review section anyway? Ha ha. (RB)
\$3, Alarm Press, P.O. Box 200069, Boston, MA 02120

Alarm Clock #38 Focusing on female musicians from Bif Naked to Bree Sharp, this zine has interviews, show reviews and record reviews. Pretty well written with good illustrations of the people profiled. At times it's a little Goth for my tastes, but there is a pretty good balance of other stuff, such as a Ani DiFranco show review and an interview with the Damned. There's also a surprising number of records reviews, each pretty lengthy. \$2. (KR)
Allen Salyer, P.O. Box 1551, Royal Oak, MI 48068-1551.

Alternative Press Review, Spring 2000 Serious publication dealing with topics and viewpoints that the mainstream media are afraid to talk about, usually reprinted from other alternative media sources. (CK)

Anyeranism #1 Anyeranism is a cut and paste, mostly poetry zine with an article on health care. The layout is kind of sporadic and seems a little disorganized, but overall, if you're into poetry zines, this is not a bad first issue. (ES)
\$2; 575 Harrison St., Sebastopol, CA 95472

Artcore Fanzine #14 A message to all zine editors: if your font and character size is unreadable, no one is going to read your zine! Even though I had to hold the pages three inches in front of my eyes to attempt to read it, I did gather that there are tons of reviews and a few columns about how punk can change the world, along with an article on the Seattle riots and interviews with Brezhnev, The Tone and Grand Theft Audio. Read this only if you have super-human vision. (CK)
Artcore, 1 Aberdulais Road Gabalfardiff CF 142 PH Wales UK (at least I think so...they wrote the address as one long word)

As The World Burns #16 Eric Action must realize that I am a Satanic bastard as he sends me all of the Christian drivel that comes through PP HQ, giggling maniacally I am sure! This contains a long story on (I shit you not) the editors battle with the forces of evil in the form of a demonic possession. Of course Christ was right there to assist the poor sap with this "spiritual warfare" whatever... 24 copied pages, an interview with The Lawrence Arms, and religion thrown in everywhere makes for a really average zine especially since this poor fuck is on issue 16. (MY)
\$1 501 Johns drive Apt#6, Stevens Point, WI 54481

Attention Deficit Disorder, Issue #9 Similar in style and content to say, Flipside, this is a fanzine in the finest definition. But it's not over the top in depth like some geekoid fanzine, or done in order to look cool in front of their friends and family (do zines impress families?). Nope, this is straight up interviews, Al from Suburban Voice, SOIA, etc., reviews, and articles that lead you to believe that the editors have more fun than most holed up in the bedroom fanzine types. Cool Sunday night beer drinking read. (AS)
ADD, PO 8240, Tampa, FL 33674

Auscar Morbid #8 Tara from Chicago comes at us with another edition of this wacky comic. The layout is very cool with this pink ink coming at you in every page. (BC)
Stamp Tara 1621 N. Washtenaw Ave. Chicago, IL 60647

Behave #2 Behave focuses on political and social commentary, including an essay making a case for voting for Ralph Nader and a critique of a *New York Times* article discussing technology of the future. There is also some proletariat poetry and an analysis of anarchy. It's largely hit and miss. Technology story: miss. Among other things, it's laid out in a font (Impact) that's just brutal to read a lot of text in. Hit: A transcript of a commencement speech criticizing U.S. actions in Iraq. The writing, while thought provoking, could use some tweaking to convey the point better. (KR)
Free, but donations accepted. Gabe Thompson, 4849 Vanderbilt Drive, San Jose, CA 95130.

Brazen Hussy #5 A whacked out e-mail letter starts out this zine full of thoughts and comics. Some interesting stuff and some just kinda eye candy comics that you glance at. (BC)
\$1 P.O. Box 13105 Gainesville, FL 32601

Broken Tapes on the Median #1 A lit zine with 15 prose poems, some with titles, some without, some with fancy designs, some without. There's a neat one about the road and Route 66 and deserts. If you enjoy micro-fiction, especially surreal and angsty micro-fiction, then

this is your ballgame. It's not my favorite medium, although I appreciated the precision of details in this writing, it's much better than that of a lot of comparable lit zines. I'd like to see more continuity between the different works, maybe some more hammering out of the characters and themes of the pieces at the beginning, which resonated the most with me. (DAL)
Poette002@aol.com

Clamor #2 Scenster Jen Angel has teamed with Jason Kucsma to produce this dense, professionally produced magazine. The content is a medley of progressive politics, first person travel accounts, hip hop posturing, and cultural criticism. Clamor is problematic for a couple of reasons. First of all, with such slick production, it's mind boggling why so little attention is paid to the design. With page after page of totally gray layouts, it manages to be less visually appealing than the Nation. The writing either sounds like punks trying to sound like grad students, or grad students trying to sound like punks, but it never sounds natural, and it's never really engaging. This is a project that's way too ambitious to be done in a strangely half-hearted way. (DAL)
\$4, PO Box 1225, Bowling Green, OH 43402

Complete Control #7 This zine documents the happenings of the local government and the Virginia Commonwealth College to eradicate the homeless situation in Monroe Park in 1998. According to this zine which has collected newspaper clippings along with other people voices, showcases the meddling of the college with the affairs of the homeless of that area. The reader will see how the community struck back and organized an event to raise awareness that the homeless can't be swept away and put under the kitchen rug. You can read about the "tent city" that was erected during opening weekend of VCU's fall semester. This is very informative and interesting about an unsung part of history. (DM)
DMM, PO Box 17838 Clearwater, FL 33762
\$4.95, AAL Press, PO Box 4710 Arlington, VA 22204

Cool Beans! #12 The Sports Issue — and yes you can be punk and like Sports, really. One of my favorite zines. Cool Beans rarely disappoints, and this is no exception. I think you should pick this up for the bonus CD with a bunch of punkers and the Stanford Marching Band doing "Crazy Train:" and the Zodiac Killers cover of "Johnny won't do to Heaven". This is good stuff: great column from Ben Weasel, interview with Kevin Seconds, sports violence and lots of hockey. You should be getting every issue, and remember that the bonus CD is actually worth the \$\$ alone (unlike many zines) because it has many exclusive tracks. (EA)
\$5.95 3181 Mission #113 San Francisco, Ca 94110

Defomacionculturalzine #3 Issue number three is out from this hardcore edged Spanish zine from Argentina. The writers are very free to express whatever they want. Check it out. (BC)

\$3 Default P.O. Box 1424, 1000 Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Dork Lifestyle / Kneehigh / Where's A Cookie / This Is Your Toy... Yes there are a bunch of different zines listed above. But all of which have all been released by this one woman named Missy Kulik. It seems that Missy likes to make these bizarre comic zines that can fit in your pocket. Dork Lifestyle documents moments in Missy's life through illustrations. The Kneehigh zines are quick drawings with a certain theme. One Kneehigh shows all the costumes her mom made her for Halloween. The other is a collection of trivial things seen on a road trip like a stove, a camper that was rumored to store Ren and Stimpy among other things. This Is Your Toy And I Want It is a fictional story about an odd toy that has a portal to a place with other toys of the same make. Where's A Cookie is the funniest of all the others because it's about a rabbit looking for a cookie. These are generally pretty weird and pointless but I couldn't stop laughing at them when a friend and I were looking at them without the influence of foreign substances. They're small and bizarre. What else do you need? A monkey that fetches beer? Maybe... (DM)

\$.50 and a stamp, Missy Kulik 24 Longvue Circle Ambridge, PA 15003

Dorkboy #4 Dorkboy is a clever and funny short comic that will make you laugh. If you like out their puns and villains (kinda in the TICK way of things) then you will like this. Number four finds Dorkboy fighting evil. (Well, they all seem to be about fighting evil... Its an endless battle ya' know) (BC)

1? Dorkboy 443 Berkeley Cres. NW, Calgary, Alberta. Canada T3K-1A9

Double Down #4 After giving a glowing review of issue #3, I can say I wasn't let down with the new issue of Double Down. Though I was sad to see the standard 8.5" X 11" format after the last issue was 11" X 14". The artwork and layout are too good not to keep up with the huge size, though I am sure that distros and stores hated it. This time they interview Dan Clowes (I know it has been done, but hey did it better), Man or Astroman! (always a good listen) and Dionysus Records (quite a story if you don't know it). Any fan of the Gearhead crowd will love this. They call it "unusual music, art, and film", pretty much says it all. Very entertaining and eye pleasing. (EA)

Bottleneck Distro. Check your local stores.

Drinking Sweat in the Ash Age #1 Half typed, half hand-written in caps, this is also half good. It takes me back to the end of my freshman year of college, when high-school convictions meet the changes that come with growing up and growing less self-righteous. This zine treats that line: On one hand there's insightful writing, mostly prose and analysis of everyday life; on the other, there are the typical underground zine fodder, a certain holier-than-thou attitude to the vast expanse of mainstream culture. Writing about the vacuousness of parties (p. 32) is hackneyed. Writing about your experiences when a friend was raped (p. 27) is intriguing. Stick to the latter.

\$3. P.O. Box 14223, Gainesville, FL 32604. (KR)

Evil Numero Duex Great looking fanzine out of, I believe Switzerland, with columns, interviews (Don

Caballero, Dalek, At the Drive-In and lots more), and reviews, etc. I wish could tell you more but it appears to be written in French. So all you French students, pick it up, and treat it as entertaining homework. (AS)
Evil, PO Box 5117, CH-1211, Geneva 11, Switzerland

Fear Why The Mouse Can't Breath #2 In this issue Al writes six stories about love and life. Sounds simple, but it's his insightfulness and colorful language that makes you nod your head and feel like you were right there as it's all happening. It's a little short, but it's only fifty cents, and well worth it. (ES)

5258 Five Fingers Way, Columbia, MD 21045

Filterlanes #1 This is an interesting, solid, nice looking zine, courtesy of Zu Book, a 14-year-old from Singapore. A very impressive effort. We have interviews with Avail, Plain Sunset, Krigshot, and Chris Dodge. Some personal stories, and record reviews. Standard stuff, but lots of youthful enthusiasm, and a few engagingly strange moments, like the piece on how you should get a new perspective on things by sleeping on your couch, or the moment in the Avail interview where he asks: "Now for a shit question. What would you do with a broomstick and a window-panel?" ??? Beau's answer: "Probably throw them away?" (DAL)

\$2, Zu Boon, Robinson Road Post Office, PO Box 343, Singapore 900643, Singapore

Fuck That Bitch As you can imagine from the name of the zine, Cori can get pretty pissed off ("fuck feminism"), and this is the best part of the zine. She writes about being the intellectual troublemaker in her gender studies class where she tells the class full of headline feminist-theory types that she works at Hooters and they explode. Also angry is the bit on relationships ("the entire cretin population that surrounds me and infects me with their presence seems to find mates and procreate, whereas I am left with my hand on my 12-inch metal lover"). The more spite the better, the treatises on straight edge and go-go are a bit boring. The interview with Saves the Day was better than your average band interview because they just talk a lot about other bands, which is fun. (DAL)

Cori, 1243 W. Cary St., Richmond, VA 23220

Impact Press, #27 As stated on the cover, "covering issues the way media should", this zine covers all sorts of topics that the mainstream media shys away from (why I don't know), offering viewpoints on third party politics, capitol punishment, etc. all laced with website addresses allowing one to gather more information, and/or, get involved. An MRR style layout and presentation make for an informative, possibly educational, read for anyone, as I believe that you cannot fully believe your own point of view without first investigating the alternatives. The only music related parts are the advertisements and album reviews. Recommended. (AS)

Impact Press, PMB 361, 10151 University Blvd., Orlando, FL 32817

The Inner Swine Vol.6 Issue 2 This issue has sixty pages of fiction, interviews, and clever commentaries on things like selling out, getting a book deal, wasted time, debt, professions that will get you damned to hell, and all the sarcasm and humor you could ask for. (ES)

\$2/trade, digest 293 Griffith St. #9, Jersey City, NJ 07307

Insurgente verano99 As a Mexican-American and former Texan, I don't often see political zines geared towards my fellow Hispanics, so this was a very nice

change of pace. Inside this twenty-eight page digest size zine, you'll find essays on Mexican/Latino music (and I'm not just talking cheeseball Ricky Martin), politics, your rights and the police, being a substitute teacher, books, and more. And while I'll admit that \$3 is a little steep, this zine is very informative and well put together, and in my opinion, well worth it. (ES)
Alejandro, P.O. Box 37105, San Antonio, TX 78237

Jaded In Chicago #9 This is a very enthusiastic zine written by kids who care about the scene and who enjoy good music. The quality on this is pretty decent as well. This is a full page B/W zine full of interviews, local band focus, columns, comics, and music reviews. The featured interviewed bands include Dillinger Four, American Steel, the Ataris, Millencollin the Honor System and the Gamits. Not bad at all. (DM)

4031 Forest Ave. Western Springs, IL 60558

Last Hug Magazine #7 I loved this zine. The first fifteen pages are stories, beautifully written, and I wonder how much is reality based or if it's all fiction. Honestly, I wish I had his ability to be so descriptive without being wordy (I'm sure it'd help me with these reviews.. heh), and his knack for story-telling. There are also some zine and music reviews which, though very well done, maybe take away from the rest of the zine a bit, but overall this zine is excellent. (ES)
email elbert_chang@hotmail.com to get a copy.

Life is Trying #3/Paxil - Split zine LIT is filled with very interesting stories, journal entries, & anecdotes about traveling, living in shitty situations, and Punk Rock. Jason writes really well in a manner which assists the reader in visualizing the situations as they come up in the narrative. Paxil is the creation of a Punk Rock kid who is going through the muck of some mental illness and self loathing. "Mostly I hate myself for being borderline manic/depressive & for being a neurotic weird hypochondriac freak." This is a very nice effort especially the Bouncing Souls/Avail tour stories. (MY)
Paxil, POB 821, Valley Station, NY 11582

Message From The Homeland #5 My disgust for Christianity subsided a wee bit with my penetration into this zine. It is well laid out by a (self described) nondenominational Christian college kid. His writing although well versed is often contradictory with his absolute love for Jesus and his distrust of religion (of any type) The main selling point of this message is a group interview thang with key players from Equal Vision Recs, Catharsis, Trial, Retrogression which is 9 pages long. This child of Christ can defiantly write a review get this: Avoid this CD like an ugly crack head with AIDS who wants to have unprotected sex on top of a bed of used syringe needles." 32 pages on newsprint. (MY)

\$2-David Lucander, POB 4248, Springfield MA 01101

Microfilm Vol.1 #2 The magazine of personal cinema in action." 36 pages of very interesting articles about super indie films and festivals that I have never heard of. Extremely informative glossy well written. What more can I say, now I am stuck with a jones for finding these killer shorts and features. (MY)

Optyeryx Press, POB 45, Champaign IL, 61824-0045

Mod Magazine This magazine has a shit load of reviews as well as a look at buildings in San Diego. (A nice idea put to print) Also inside is a feature on the

new band "Her Space Holiday." (BC)
Mod P.O. Box 161024 San Diego, CA. 92176

New Philistine #44 Forty-four issues? Wow. At first I didn't really understand what this was all about... and I'm still not quite sure that I do, but I guess this is pretty much a literary review type zine. The majority of this zine seems to talk about how pretentious and ridiculous some collection of writings called "Timothy McSweeney" something or other is. Maybe I'm out of the loop, but I have no idea what that is. (ES)

\$2; King Wencias P.O. Box 42077, Philadelphia, PA 19101

Oh Messy Life #1 Kind of a waste of time. One gains no insight by reading it. Poor interview. Fragments of a boring life that doesn't need to be shared with us. (RB)
118 Granville Way, San Francisco, CA 94127

OK Spark #1 First, let me say this to all zinesters - If you invest hours, days, months in creating something as time consuming as a zine, and want the people you are sending it to see how it is supposed to look (all in one piece), please put it in an envelope! Now, having said that, this zine is very well laid out, using some kind of computer program, and all of the pictures and graphics are great. There are articles on mullets, body image, music and show reviews, some interviews, the Alkaline Trio, Rainer Maria, Wolfie, and more. (ES)
3445 N. University, Suite 182, Peoria, IL 61604-1322

Paper Scissors Clock #3 An eclectic zine done by a self-proclaimed Anglophile residing in Minnesota (go figure). Featuring a surprisingly interesting article on Hedgehogs, intelligent interviews with Red Monkey and Bratmobile 2000 and quirky pieces on the greatness of BBC documentaries and community supported farming. (CK)

\$1; PO Box 14117 Minneapolis, MN 55414

Plea For Peace Vol. 1 #1 A huge 1st effort at 88 pages (on newsprint) This is dedicated to radical politics and features many reprints from: Crimethinc., Black Panther Party, Food Not Bombs, National Coalition for the Homeless, Sea Shepard, Earth First etc. The most interesting reprint was from Z magazine, it was an interview with exiled black Panther Party member Assata Shakur in Cuba. Recommended to our younger readers who may not be too aware of these fine organizations. (MY)

\$3-Plea For Peace, POB 64, Greencastle PA, 17225

Please Don't Let Them #00 "I killed my elbow.

When my elbow fell off, all the butterflies lifted it and went high in the atmosphere. After a few minutes, it started to rain so I couldn't see where they were going." The evidence speaks for itself. (RB)
K. Jarecki, 4114 9th Ave. Apt. 4F, Brooklyn, NY 11232

Potatoe #6/ Armchair Water Boy #12 split

Armchair Water Boy gives us bad sappy poetry about heartbreak. Potatoe churns out three page stories with weak plot and no character development. (CK)

Potatoe, PO Box 1891 Fayetteville, AR 72702-1891

Rockist #2 I enjoyed the hell out of this 64 page emo/indie rock Mag. The layout & structure of this zine is exceptional with a heavy thick cover and metal clasps holding it all together. The interviews in this were top notch weather you like At the Drive In, The Faint, Blue Tip, Fluke Starbucker, Knapsack, Muler or not. (MY)
539 Washington Street #2 Brighton, MA 02135

Sandpaper #8 Newspaper-esque with big type, this zine goes by the mantra of "revolution, resistance and regeneration." Yet the opening story is a first-person account of mistaken identity in Chicago when the author enjoyed the spoils of fame when people mistook him for a Pogue. Very entertaining, but hardly revolutionary—however, there is analysis of the WTO disturbances (No. 1 on this year's Zine Topics Top 40) and a disturbing gay-bashing incident at a prominent Chicago bar. Also an obituary for soul great Curtis Mayfield, which got "Pusher Man" stuck in my head. I didn't mind. The writing is articulate, but the subject matter a little broad. And try as I might, I just can't get through anymore damn WTO stories.

Free. 1573 N. Milwaukee Ave., #420, Chicago, IL 60622.

Scam #4 You need to have this magazine. It's so full and enriching it will take you about a week to read it. Best of all: it's completely punk rock. A true fanzine in all its glory. Absolutely stupendous. If I were to do this, it would take more than a year to lay out. I don't know how often this comes out, but you need to track it down whenever it does. (RB)

\$2, PO Box 40272, San Francisco, CA 94140

Short, Fast + Loud! - No. 05 This zine focuses its bloodshot eyes and bleeding ears on all that is fast and ferocious in the world of music. Call it whatever you want, grind, crust, hardcore, thrash, or just plain rock and roll, the scene veterans behind this rag dish it out with an unbridled enthusiasm for the artform. This issue has the standard reviews and columns along with a "where are they now" about Heresy, an interview with Blaine from The Fartz/Accused and more. And if all that seems foreign to you, just please stay away, or send \$2 and prepare to be educated. (AS)

Short, Fast, and Loud, P.O. Box 420843, San Francisco, CA 94142-0843, USA

Sob Story #3 This is a great little photo zine that came close to heart for this reviewer. The 38 1/2 pages gave me some shots of my favorites like: 5.6.7.8's, Guitar Wolf, Dictators, Mighty Ceasars, Reatards, Skateboarding and some scenic shots of mostly Chicago. The offset printing make the photos look glorious and a great one to throw one your coffee table. The covers are silkscreened on beer cases and obviously took way too much work to be appreciated. This reminds me of what makes zines great - a lot of heart and attention to quality. (EA)

\$2.75 Sob Story PO Box 138273 Chicago, IL 60613

Sound Collector #4 The name says it all. This is for the guy who loves his music really far out there with a classical tinge. (Note that I didn't say girl, because usually girls don't like this avant-garde stuff...it seems to be for nerdy guys) This book sized informative zine features discussions with bands; Pere Ubu, U.S. Maple, and people like Harry Partch and David S. Ware. For serious music lovers only. (BC)

\$5 P.O. Box 2056 New York, NY 10013-0882

Sphagnum Nagasaki #8 The editor has a weird obsession with talking shit on celebrities (goes on at length about Kevin Costner, and then lists the addresses of unsuspecting luminaries like Cary Coleman, Jon Bon Jovi, and the Pope). Lots of capsule reviews of mainstream cult films, an interview with the Bloodhound Gang (???), and other silliness. There's some promising cut and paste design with a nice edge, but the text is

all pretty trite. The record reviews include the Instrument soundtrack, and the blurb starts, "I had never heard Fugazi before..." Maybe now that the editor has heard Fugazi, he'll turn his life around and put his design skills to better use. (DAL)

\$3; 14 Dunluce Ave, Brighton, SA 5048, Australia

Tape Op #17 The premier recording magazine for punk/indie/alternative rockers. Even if you know little about recording and like to record on a simple 4-track you will love this zine. The interviews with the bands and producers/engineers often give a lot of insight into the records that we love. You will get a total different interview from Tape Op and that is what makes this my favorite zine for reading bands getting interviewed. Their slant towards the analog format makes me smile with every issue. Though the heart of the zine is to record with what you can get. The format and topics lead to new conversations. Case in point - Did you know that Ween recorded a song with one member in a trunk with a microphone while singing with the car driving around doing donuts in the parking lot. I guarantee that isn't something that you would have read in Spin. This issue has interviews with Dave Fridmann (producer Flaming Lips), Mercury Rev, Wharton Tiers (Sonic Youth), Robyn Hitchcock, more, more. Even if you don't know your audio equipment, you will enjoy this great magazine. (EA)
Free Subscriptions at www.tapeop.com

The Torch #38 This was my first introduction to the journal of the Young People's Socialist League, something I greeted with a great deal of hesitation considering I am hardly a socialist, much less left-leaning. Nevertheless, I cast aside my ideological prejudices and just read. Fifteen quick pages on newsprint, pixilated photos and layouts that could use some tweaking, but the revolution won't be well designed, right? Coherent, intelligent articles on the never-written-about WTO and why it's bad, NAFTA and why it's bad, an explanation of class and, uh, why it's bad, and then some random review of an Atari Teenage Riot record. The writing is articulate and occasionally insightful. Pick it up if you want to smash it up.

The Torch, c/o Sean Gullory, P.O. Box 56326, Riverside, CA 92517. (KR)

Twin Cities Hardcore Journal #2 This is a scene report zine focusing on the hardcore and metal happenings of the Minneapolis and surrounding scenes. This is only the second issue and there's a lot of potential within these pages. Besides interviews with bands like Reach The Sky, Holding On and Encroach there are columns covering local happenings, music reviews and articles. B/W full pager. (DM)

803 Thomas Ave. St. Paul, MN 55104

Zuckerman Forty pages of disturbing and maniacal rantings about an equally disturbing obsession with Kathleen Hanna of Bikini Kill fame. If I were Kathleen, I'd get a restraining order just to be on the safe side. Fun to read, scary to live. (CK)

\$2, Molly Zuckerman, 1029 Legion Way Olympia, WA 98501

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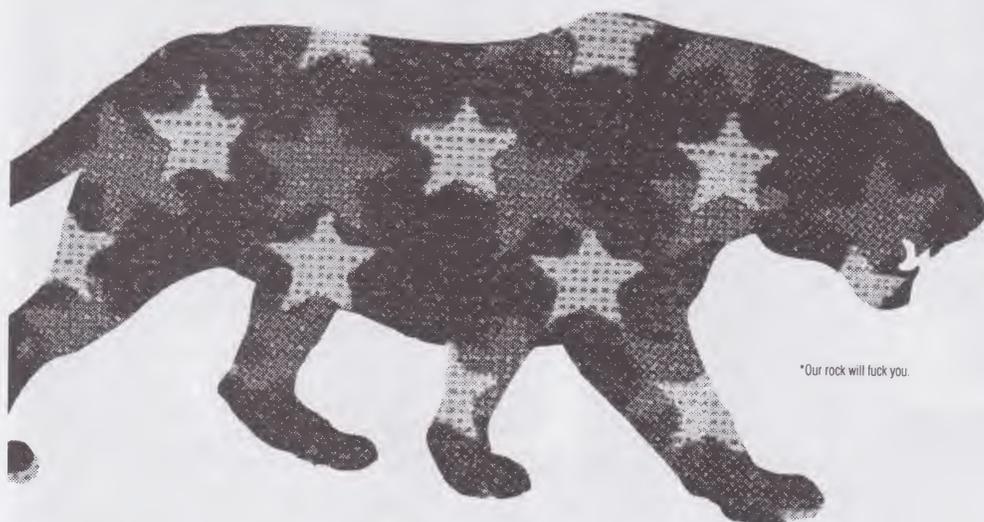
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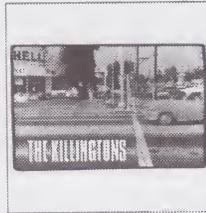
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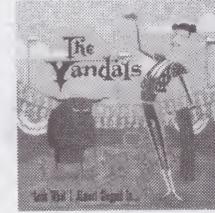
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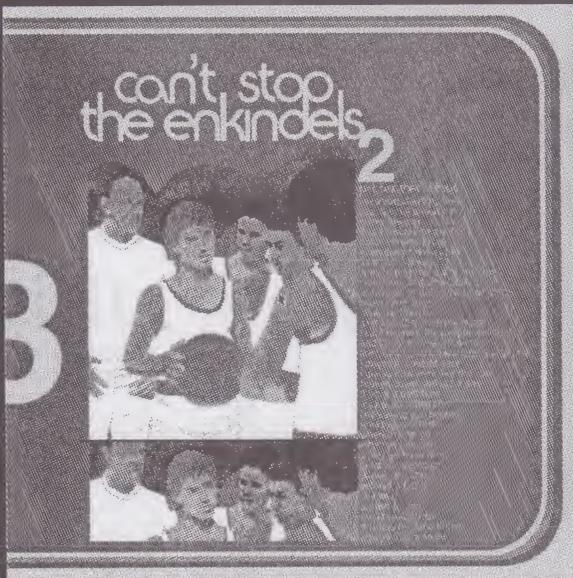
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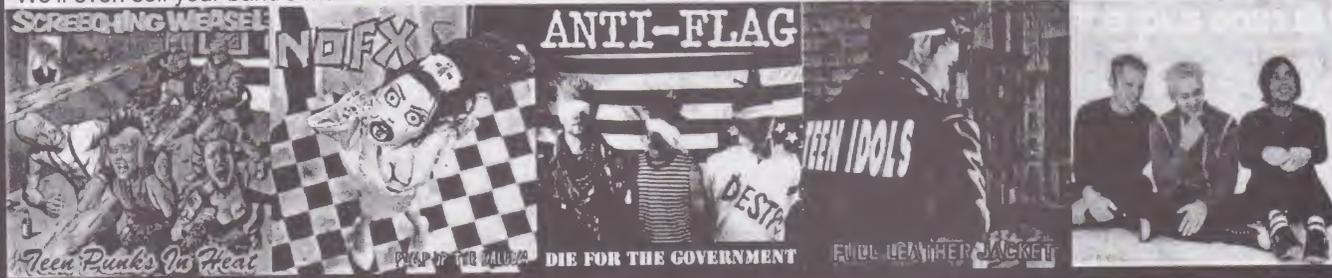


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PAPER

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The Outlaw Bible of American Poetry

Alan Kaufman, editor
Thunder's Mouth Press

It's hard to begrudge anyone success in the world of poetry, because it's not like people are getting rich off it. At the same time, there are a wealth of good writers out there who have consistently fallen through the cracks in the literary establishment, whether because they live in the wrong place or write for the wrong people.

It is poets who fall into this latter category that predominate in *The Outlaw Bible of American Poetry*—inhabitants of the literary underworld who target their work, not at critics or the classroom, but at our society's misfits. Bringing the word to cafes, bars, music venues and the airwaves, they attest to poetry's transformative power. Like the "Archaic Torso of Apollo" described by the almost too famous German poet Rainer Maria Rilke—now you know where the band got their name—their poems confront you with a persistent demand: "You must change your life."

To be sure, many of the contributors to this anthology are "names:" William Carlos Williams, Tupac Shakur, Allen Ginsberg, Patti Smith, to name a few. But, whether by inclination or necessity, these luminaries occupy the outer limits of the poetic firmament. In the face of poetry's long decline into irrelevance, they insist that it should be a vital part of everyday life. Even as our celebrity-obsessed culture tells us that the stars are not like ourselves, the work of these poets breaks down the distinctions between names and no-names. And that's why it's

not only appropriate, but necessary that this anthology pair Jack Kerouac with Julia Vinograd, Che Guevara with Philomen Long, Diane diPrima with Susan Scutti.

The no-names come off very well in the bargain. Consider David Lerner's address to the nineteenth-century French poet Arthur Rimbaud, one of the medium's last true superstars:

I know you like I know my dick
the way you burned and fled

savaged by beauty
possessed by genius as kind as a
hangman's noose

Id've liked to
share a number with you
as the late night glaze of North Beach
glowed over into the dawn
talking about everything at once

These lines deliberately recall Allen Ginsberg's famous poem to Walt Whitman, but they stand firmly on their own free-verse feet. Lerner isn't trying to outdo Ginsberg, but to prevent his legacy from becoming a museum piece. In this context, to write like Ginsberg or Williams, or Kerouac or even Jim Carroll is not derivative, but affirmative. It means that those writers' populist vision is very much alive. An analogy with punk is entirely appropriate here: Does the music of Fugazi, Sleater-Kinney or the Promise Ring signal an exhausted genre? Only if you are listening with your ears closed. And the same goes for all those bands out there dishing out heartfelt rock and roll with only the sparest hope of making it big. In mocking them, we risk making a mockery of ourselves.

I had the privilege of seeing many of the "no-name" poets in *The Outlaw Bible* perform in the San Francisco Bay Area over the past decade, to standing room-only crowds at the much-lamented Cafe Babar, at nightclubs in the South of Market area, and at independent bookstores. At the time, I was a graduate student at UC-Berkeley, steeped in an understanding of what does and does not pass for good poetry in the halls of the academy. As I watched poets like David Lerner, Kathleen Wood, Mel Thompson, and Kim Nicolini strut their stuff, I would recognize all the ways in which their poems were breaking the rules of ivory tower discourse. They were too direct, too emotional, too excessive, too "real." But they rocked my world. And so, after a few minutes contemplating the spoken word scene from a distance, I would invariably find myself drawn in by its power and immediacy. I'm not much of a poet. But the lesson I learned in those smoke-filled, beer-drenched rooms taught me a critical lesson about communication: Ideas need an audience. They come alive, not in the "safe" spaces of a scholarly journal with 500 subscribers, but in those danger-filled places where a poem can still provoke a tear or a fight.

Ironically, the editor of *The Outlaw Bible*, Alan Kaufman, is the one person my friends and I couldn't stand in our years of frequenting the poetry scene. It wasn't because he's a bad poet—by the populist standard of that set, his poetry is perfectly accomplished, if rather limited in emotional range. The problem was that he always seemed to be seeking out the spotlight for himself. When CNN showed up to document the spoken word phenomenon, Kaufman was there, trying to push other poets off the stage so that he

you're

could be on TV. It left a bad taste in our mouths. And I'm not at all surprised that it is Alan Kaufman who gets credit for *The Outlaw Bible*. But you know what? I'm so happy that this book exists, that people like David Lerner—who died recently after a tragic battle with drug addiction, mental illness, and poverty—are finally making their way onto the shelves at Borders and Barnes and Noble in suburbia, that I'm willing to look past my personal distaste for its editor. Score a copy. And then go do some writing of your own.

—Charlie Bertsch

Empire

By Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri
Harvard University Press

When was the last time you met a communist who proclaimed, "The dominant stream of Marxist tradition has always hated the poor, precisely for their being 'free as birds,' for being immune to the discipline of the factory and the discipline [deemed] necessary for the construction of socialism"? Continuing on, because as with many other parts of this book, you'll want to regurgitate it in great paragraph-sized chunks, like a mama bird feeding a brood, "What was really prophetic was the poor, bird-free laugh of Charlie Chaplin when, free from any utopian illusions and above all from any discipline of liberation, he interpreted the 'modern times' of poverty, but at the same time linked the name of the poor to that of life, a liberated life and a liberated productivity."

Now, ain't that some shit? The immanence of revolution glimpsed in Charlie Chaplin, absent all those dead papers this or that dyspeptic Marxist insists on sliding under my door. Roll over Spartacists; push out the way as many -ists or -ites as you need to make room.

I'll bar the crypt door and try to keep out those grave-robbing Marxist Studies students, so you may rest. Most of them are moneychangers in the temple anyway.

The quoted passage, and others like it in *Empire*, refuse to romanticize the poor, just as Antonio Negri, and translator/co-author Hardt, refuse to be Jack Kerouac, invoking the freedom of dusky-kneed gals sitting out on porches on his walk through the "dark side of town." Negri and Hardt have the self-consciousness of the post-'60s generation to thank for avoiding that. But I bet they dig Kerouac because, like him, they bust moves across a wide terrain of intellectual history, chopping up philosophers who'd refuse to sit in the same room at a university tea but are thrown together in *Empire*. Its fusions of thought may drive academics bananas, but thrills me (and, I'll venture, you too) with a compelling portrait of the New World Order—and ways of challenging it that make sense.

Negri and Hardt are saying what folks in the street at any of this year's massive demonstrations (WTO, IMF, May Day, the DNC, etc.) are discovering: The kingdom of god lies within us, and we have a responsibility to each other to build it. Lest that god talk seem too far out, the authors begin *Empire's* revisionist history of globalization with the medieval and Renaissance philosophers who wrenched the powers of creativity and generation from the heavens and re-sited them on earth. Against these powers rose capitalism, the genius of which was to create networks to strengthen itself and the state by draining the masses and diffusing their power. Negri and Hardt cite U.S. constitutionalism—its checks and balances, or networked power—as the platform for *Empire*, the key revving the engine of capitalism towards a globally unified world, the base from which the multitude's power

(represented by popular culture) was projected into air, then cyberspace.

To argue that America set the paradigm for *Empire*, however, is not to say that the US controls it. This where Negri and Hardt begin to diverge from conventional Leftist critiques of globalization. Proclaiming "reality is not dialectical; colonialism is," the authors sweep away all the false binaries—black/white, man/woman, etc.—that have straitjacketed human identity for centuries. In globalization's erosion of national borders, sovereignty, and identities, and its production of a transnational, free-floating working class, Negri and Hardt argue it has never been more possible to realize the spirit of proletarian internationalism. The multitude that has never been so empowered to create and project itself, and imperial power, in its web-like dispersal has never been so potentially weak.

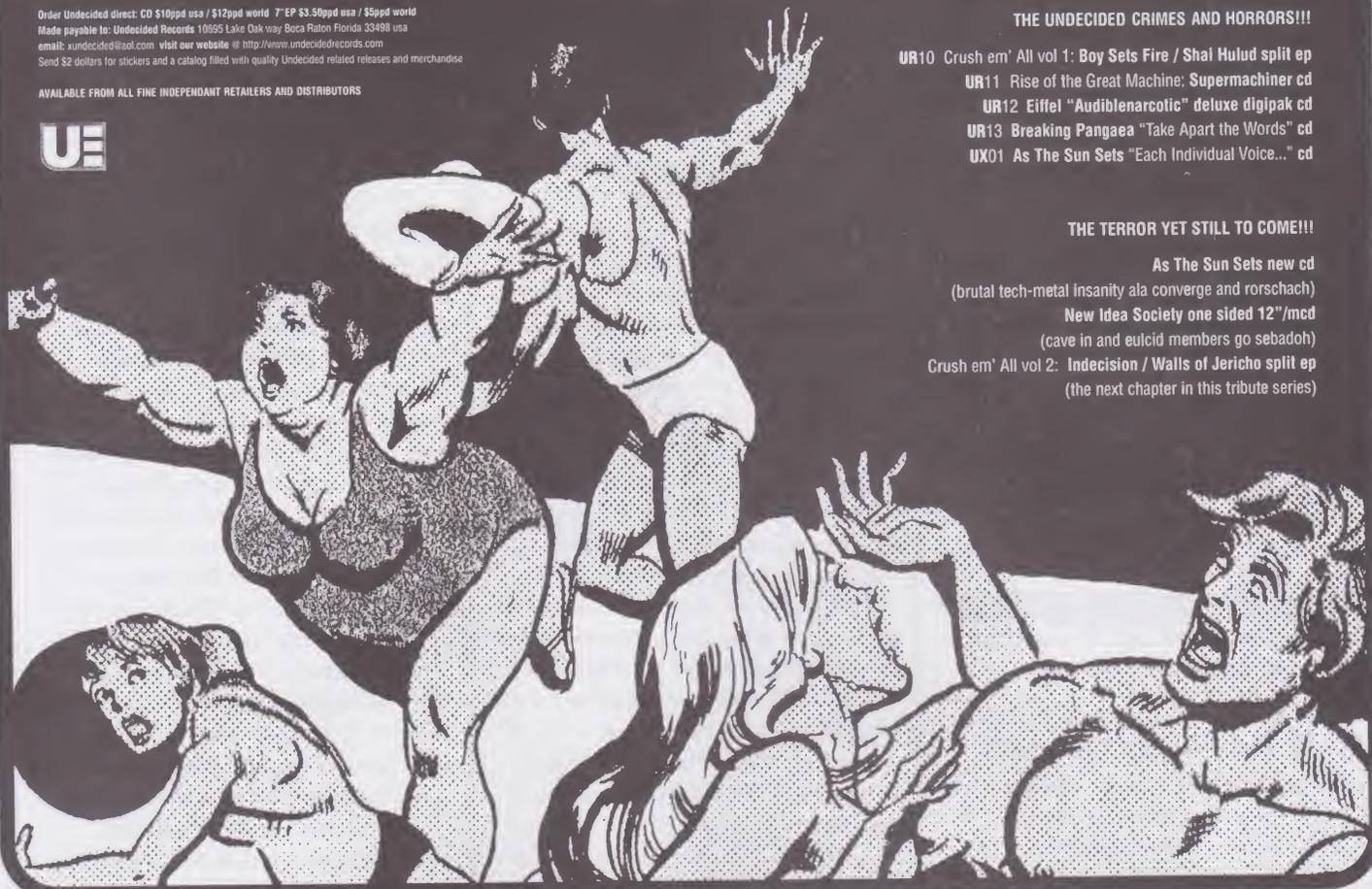
Elsewhere, Negri and Hardt note, "constituent power upsets the dialectic," by which they mean the power of being—the power to create—and from those creations build alternative networks and ways of interacting which can supersede the imperial forces that constrain us. Celebrating the passage from popular culture to people's culture, or from a representational culture to a constituent culture, we make ourselves.

You'll have to buy the book to buy the argument, to see where it diverges from *Wired*-style or indie rock entrepreneurialism. But the real value of *Empire*, besides its restoration of people power to the center of Marxism, lies in the intellectual credence and weight it gives the forms of political organizing and protest emerging now. When they hit you with Victorian novels like *Das Kapital*, you hit them with *Empire*. That is, if you have the time or desire to stop building, to engage in such conversation. —Aaron Shuman

All books reviewed in Punk Planet are independently published by small or academic presses. Due to space constraints and length requirements, not all books we receive will be reviewed, as it takes quite a bit more time to read & review a book (and write the corresponding review) than it does to plunk a needle down on a record and write a snappy capsule. If you'd like to have your book reviewed in Punk Planet, please mail it to: Punk Planet attn: Book Reviews PO Box 464 Chicago IL 60690 if you want anything else reviewed, please mail it to the reviews address given at the front of the magazine.

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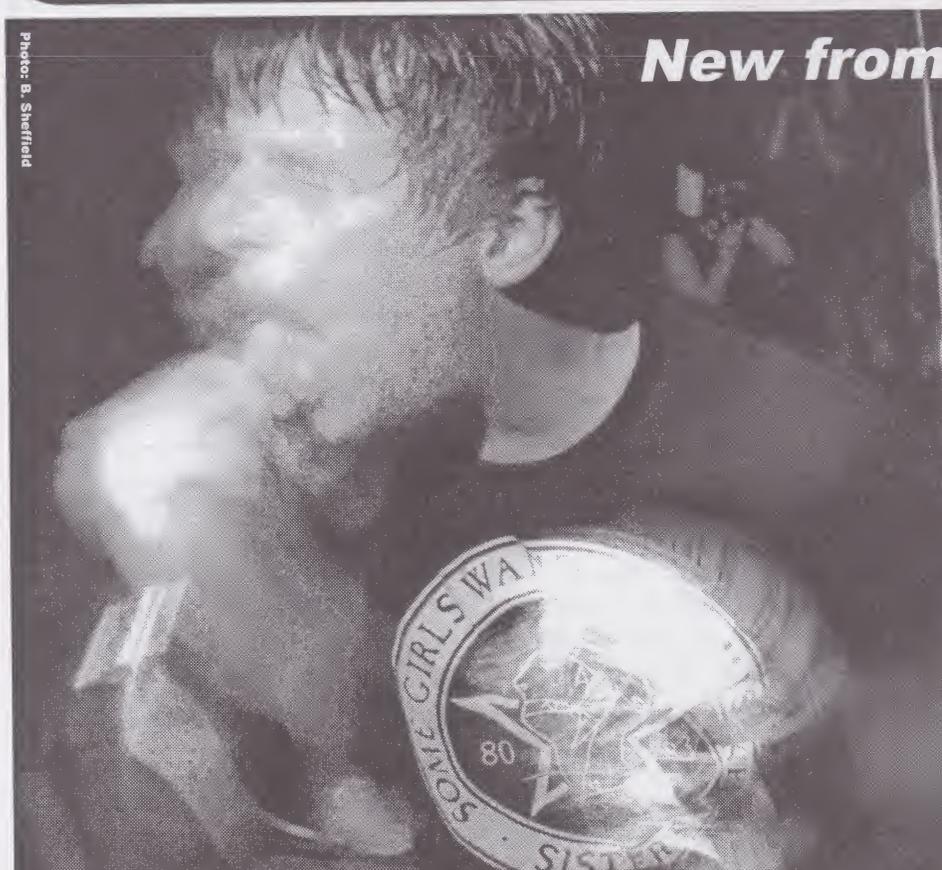
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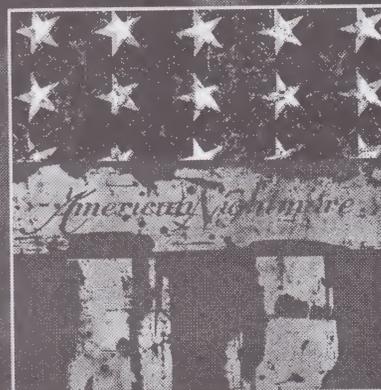
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All issues before PP15 are all black & white. Covers of PP15-21 are 2-3 color. All issues after 21 have full color covers. All issues before PP29 are printed on newsprint. Confused yet?

PP13 ADRIAN TOMINE, LIFETIME, JON MORITSUGU, and SINKHOLE. Article about VOTING. 112 pgs

PP15 20 pages of COVERAGE FROM THE 1996 DEMOCRATIC & REPUBLICAN CONVENTIONS. Interviews with Sarah Dyer/ACTION GIRL COMICS, RHYTHM COLLISION, CHAMBERLAIN, and CHEESECAKE 120 pgs

PP17 "ALL PUNK CONS" a critique of modern punk. Interviews with THE DESCENDENTS, DAN O'MAHONEY, SNAPCASE, RYE COALITION, and PAIN. Article on LIVING WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF BREAST CANCER. 136 pgs.

PP19 "HEROIN AND PUNK": an in-depth look at the dark side of the punk scene. Also interviews with LOOKOUT RECORDS, DILLINGER 4, THE SOTTIES, TROUBLEMAN UNLIMITED and the HAL AL SHEDDAD. Articles on ALTERNATIVE TENTACLES RECORD'S FIGHT WITH THE PHILADELPHIA PD, the WHO'S EMMA COLLECTIVE, JUDI BARI and WORKING AT A TELEPSYCHIC LINE. Plus much more. 164 pgs.

PP23 CHUMBAWAMBA: Has mainstream success blunted their anarchist ideals? Also inside are interviews with GEARHEAD FANZINE, LOVEITT RECORDS, SUBTERRANEAN DISTRIBUTION, THE VAN PELT and THE YOUNG PIONEERS. Articles on the PIRATE RADIO movement, on being an OUTREACH WORKER FOR HOMELESS YOUTH, GURILLA POSTERING and the RECENT CONTROVERSIES SURROUNDING THE TEAMSTERS. 154 pgs

PP26 STEVE ALBINI, talks and talks. Also interviewed in PP26: AVAIL, SMART WENT CRAZY, SERVOTRON, POLYVINYL RECORDS, COMPOUND RED and RED MONKEY. Articles include a piece about TOUCH & GO RECORDS' RECENT LAWSUIT WITH THE BUTTHOLE SURFERS, NEEDLE EXCHANGE PROGRAMS, the POLI-

TICS OF WHOLE FOODS and THE TRAGIC DEATH OF GRAFFITI ARTIST TIE. Jam-packed at 156 pages.

PP27 A rare talk with Bikini Kill's KATHLEEN HANNA. Also interviewed in PP27: DISCOUNT, CHROM-TECH, ASSÜCK, the PEECHEES, and PRANK RECORDS' Ken Sanderson. Articles include a look at the GROWING HYSTERIA SURROUNDING TEEN VIOLENCE; BRINGING HUMANITARIAN AID INTO IRAQ; A COLLEGE COURSE BASED ON PUNK and TWO ANTI-RACIST SKINHEADS WERE MURDERED IN LAS VEGAS THIS JULY—Punk Planet investigates. 156 pgs

PP28 SHOCK TREATMENT takes a look at the healthcare crisis through the eyes of musicians. This revealing article exposes the major label hypocrisy in denying its lifeblood health benefits. Also in this issue, KEVIN SECONDS, THE GET UP KIDS, JETS TO BRAZIL, RESIN RECORDS, filmmaker PENELOPE SPHEERIS, ATOM & HIS PACKAGE and NEGATVELAND. Articles include a look at RACE IN PUNK, 10 REAL REASONS TO Hate CLINTON and a RETURN TO ISRAEL. 152 pgs.

PP29 checks in with SLEATER-KINNEY. In addition to S-K, PP29 features a talks with KID DYNAMITE, The Metro-shifter's K. SCOTT RICHTER, JESSICA HOPPER, publisher of HIT IT OR QUIT IT ZINE, RAINER MARIA. Articles: Kim Bae brings you aboard as LOS CRUDDS TOURS SOUTH AMERICA. Author Mimi Nguyen takes A PERSONAL LOOK AT VIETNAM—as a homeland, as a war and as a state of mind. Also featured in PP29 is a look at THE USE OF PEPPER SPRAY BY THE POLICE; a FREE BIKE PROGRAM and the GROWING UNREST IN THE KOSOVO REPUBLIC. Plus all the other goodies. 136 pgs.

PP30 THE MURDER OF IRAQ 18 pages to coverage of the horrible destruction reaped on the Iraqi people by the US and UN's economic sanctions. Also in this issue: BRAT-MOBILE, TODAY IS THE DAY, THRILL JOCKEY RECORDS, SEAWEED, WICKED FARLEYS, VINYL COMMUNICATIONS and BLUETIP. Articles on JESSE "THE BODY" VENTURA'S VIC-

TORY IN MINNESOTA; the MISSION YUPPIE ERADICATION PROJECT, a militant group bent on ending gentrification in San Francisco; THE GREEN PARTY IN ARCATA, CALIFORNIA; and a UNION VICTORY IN A NICARAGUAN SWEATSHOP. Plus an expanded DIY section, columns, reviews and much much more. 136 pgs.

PP31 features a talk with FUGAZI and DISCHORD RECORDS frontman IAN MACKAYE. Also interviewed in this issue is THE AVENGERS' PENELOPE HUSTON. Additionally, there are talks with TED LEO, IQU, LIFTER PULLER, and DÁLEK. Punk Planet #31 also looks at the DEAD KENNEDY'S LAWSUIT—this article sheds light on the bizarre situation that has arisen to pit former bandmates against each other. PP31 also takes a look at THE POSSIBLE CLOSING OF GILMAN STREET, MAIL ORDER BRIDES FROM RUSSIA and LIVING WITH CHRONIC CYSTITIS. Plus, columns, reviews, DIY and much much more 136 pgs.

PP32 takes a personal look at the Kosovo Crisis. A moving, troubling and angering piece, LIFE DURING WARTIME. LETTERS FROM THE KOSOVO CRISIS will not allow you to look at the news the same way. In addition to these gripping letters, PP32 also features an interview with K RECORDS' CALVIN JOHNSON. Also interviewed in PP32 are NEUROSIS, ORI, MURDER CAN BE FUN FANZINE's John Marr, THE ETERNALZ, ASPHODEL RECORDS, SUBMISSION HOLD, and eclectic art mailorder CATCH OF THE DAY MAILORDER. In addition to all these interviews, Punk Planet #32 features articles the COMMUNITY RADIO MOVEMENT IN WASHINGTON DC; MULTIETHNICITIES IN MODERN CULTURE; and a revealing look at GENTRIFICATION IN TODAY'S URBAN AMERICA. Plus much, much more. 144 pgs

PP33 Sept./Oct. 1999 takes a peek at the GROWING HACKTIVIST MOVEMENT. Hacktivism has brought civil disobedience to the Internet. Also in this issue, filmmaker JEM COHEN TALKS ABOUT

MAKING "INSTRUMENT", THE FUGAZI DOCUMENTARY. In addition, PP33 features interviews with JADE TREE RECORDS, THE MELVINS, OLD TIME RELIQUIN, ALKALINE TRIO and EUPHONE. Articles in this issue include "Growing Freedom," A LOOK AT A COMMUNITY-BASED FARM IN INNER-CITY WASHINGTON DC; "Ghosts of Tiananmen," AN INSIDER'S LOOK AT TIENANMEN SQUARE 10 YEARS AFTER THE CHINESE UPRISING THERE; "Broken Vows" A COMPELLING ARGUMENT AGAINST MARRIAGE; and "A WITCH HUNT IN PUERTO RICAN CHICAGO," a gripping look at the government's persecution of Chicago's Puerto Rican community. Plus much more! 144 pgs.

PP34 Nov/Dec 1999 takes an in-depth look at THE WARPED TOUR. PP exposes the inner workings and hypocrisy of the so-called "punk rock summer camp." Also in this issue, Punk Planet sits down with WCW WRESTLER VAMPIRO, MANS RUIN RECORDS' KOZIK, SONIC YOUTH'S THURSTON MOORE, THE REPLIKANTS, CADILLACA, OPERATION IVY'S JESSE MICHAELS and PEDRO THE LION. Articles in PP34 include a look at WOMEN IN THE ZAPATISTA MOVEMENT, a very moving LETTER FROM PALESTINE, the case against GENETICALLY ALTERED FOOD, and a look at DIY PORN ON THE INTERNET. Plus much, much more—excellent for reviews, which were missing from this issue. Whoops! But hey, it's still a great read at 136 pgs.

PP35 Jan/Feb 2000 the ALL INTERVIEWS ISSUE. Headlining this special issue is a rare talk with JOE STRUMMER, the frontman of punk legends THE CLASH. Also featured in this issue, is a rare talk with LUNGFISH. Also in the all-interviews issue, talks with THE NEED, AMERICAN STEEL MERGE, the LEFT BUSINESS OBSERVER'S DOUG HENWOOD, and THE MR. T EXPERIENCE'S DR. FRANK, the mastermind behind BIG WHEEL RECREATION RECORDS, POSITIVE FORCE DC's MARK ANDERSON and much, much more. 152 pgs

PP36 March/April 2000 Punk Planet #36 takes a long, hard look at THE DEATH OF A PUNK IN AMARILLO TEXAS. Punk Planet writer Chris Ziegler travels to Amarillo, talks to the people involved and writes about the case and its aftermath. Also in PP36 is the story of the WTO PROTESTS in words & pictures. In addition to these two feature stories, PP36 features interviews with MATADOR RECORDS, THE COUP, AK PRESS, DENNIS COOPER, AT THE DRIVE IN, TAPE OF MAGAZINE, LIMPWRIST and SARGE's ELIZABETH ELMORE, and many more. Articles in PP36 include moving PORTRAITS FROM IRAQ and a look at the LUTHER PLACE SHELTER, a shelter for homeless women in Washington DC. Plus there are columns, DIY, reviews and much, much more. 144 pgs

PP37 May/June 2000 CRIME AND JUSTICE 2000. In three articles, Punk Planet #37 takes a look at the sorry state of the American criminal justice system. POLICE BRUTALITY is looked at in the article "War in the Streets." YOUTH ORGANIZING AROUND PROPOSITION 21 is investigated in "No Power like the Youth" and the PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX is exposed in "Crisis and Control." Interviews in this issue include STELLA MARRS; J-CHURCH'S LANCE HAHN; STEPHEN DUNCOMBE, author of ZINES AND THE POLITICS OF ALTERNATIVE CULTURE; the EVOLUTION CONTROL COMMITTEE; Q AND NOT U; EXHUMED FILMS; HORACE PINKER; and the story of STALAG 13, a Philadelphia-based punk club that was shut down by the city, fought to be reopened and won. Finally, PP37 takes a look at the SAD STATE OF THE PRESIDENTIAL RACE and PP takes a peek at the lawsuit between the RECORDING INDUSTRY OF AMERICA AND MP3.COM. Plus more. 144 pgs.

PP38 July/August 2000 VOICES OF THE NEW LEFT. PP sits down with a number of the organizations involved in bringing new voices to the streets as well as talking to a couple of people who have been there for quite some time. Interviewed in the "Voices" series

are NOAM CHOMSKY, JELLO BIAFRA, DIRECT ACTION NETWORK, RUCKUS SOCIETY, QUEER TO THE LEFT and GLOBAL EXCHANGE. Also interviewed in this issue, BOY SETS FIRE, UNWOUND talk about building their new recording studio, post-hardcore label HYDRAHEAD RECORDS, controversial publisher SOFT SKULL BOOKS, MELVINS bassist Joe Preston talks about his project THE THRONES, electronic artist LESSER checks in and art rockers LES SAVY FAV yap at you. Also, PP38 takes a look at the growing RAPTIVIST movement. Interviewed in PP38 looks at the GROWING ANTI-WALMART MOVEMENT. Much more. 156 pgs.

PP39 Sept/Oct 2000 Looks back at the PUNK SIGNING BOOM OF THE MID-'90s in the article "The Crash." Six years after punk "broke" into the mainstream, Punk Planet talks to many of the bands involved, GREEN DAY, JAWBREAKER, JAWBOX, SAMIAM, GIRLS AGAINST BOYS, THE SMOKING POPE, FACE TO FACE, JIMMY EAT WORLD, TEXAS IS THE REASON and more, to learn their stories—some good, many bad. Think you know what happened? Think again. Also in this issue: a lengthy interview with KILL ROCK STARS founder SLIM MOON; punk rock upstarts THE EXPLOSION; crooner MARY TIMONY; artist SUE COE; political electronic artists ULTRA-RED; and the mastermind behind the website DISINFO.COM; and the woman behind the CENTRAL OHIO ABORTION ACCESS FUND. Articles in this issue (beyond the massive cover story) include a look at how groups like the WTO ARE EFFECTING THE LIVES OF THE GREAT APES; a report on the CHICAGO POST-ROCK SCENE; and economist Doug Henwood writes "BOOM FOR WHOM" which puts a new perspective on the "new" economy. Also in this issue are all the reviews, columns, DIY and much, much more. 152 pgs

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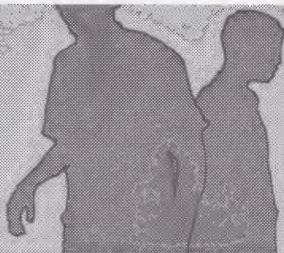
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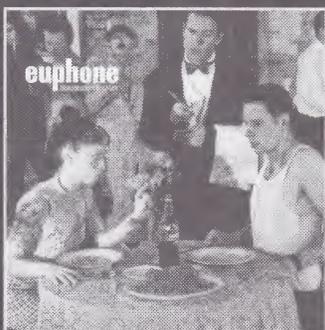
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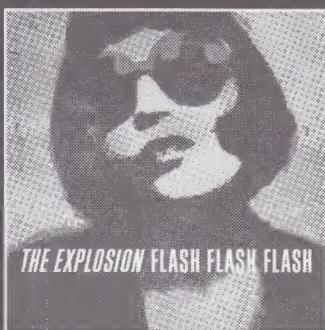
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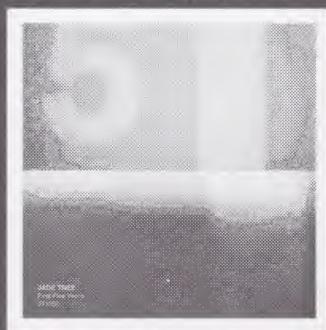
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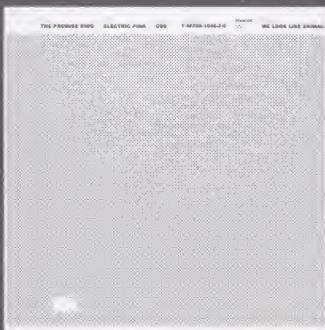
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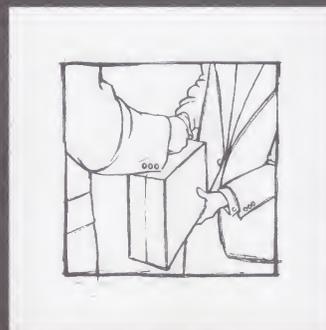
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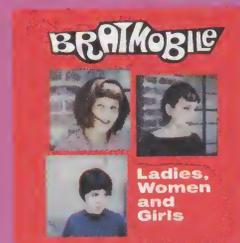
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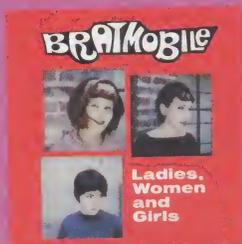


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